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[ONE PENNY.]



TOM AND HIS FRIEND'S ENCOUNTER WITH THE GIPSIES.

TOM RATTLEBRAIN; Or, The Mystery of the Old School Tower.

CHAPTER VII.
THE WHIRLPOOL.

THE time passed but slowly away at the "Dusthole" for Tom Rattlebrain.

The letter he had received from his father had for the time shadowed the sunshine of his life.

But yet in his inmost heart he had a suspicion that all was not right.

What could have been the means by which Dr. Dustall had intercepted a letter he could not guess.

But there was something in his heart which told him it must be so: that the father he had so loved

would never have so written to him, or about him.

His spirits rose at length however.

The time before the return of his father from abroad was a long one.

But it seemed that during that time he would have to be satisfied with his position.

So in spite of what he knew of the fate of Boh Thurlow—in spite of the terrible flogging which he

had received at the hands of the Doctor, he resolved to make himself as happy as he could at the academy during the time he was compelled to be there.

It was about a week after the scene with Dr. Dastall that having obtained permission to go into the fields near the town, he wandered away in company with his friend Marland.

They were glad to escape from the worry and confinement of the school, and wandered away up the green winding lane which led to the high hills, with as joyous hearts as if nothing of grief or work was behind them.

There was at the summit of the High Hills (for so they were called in the vicinity) a sudden depression, which led down towards a kind of basin, at the bottom of which was a sparkling pool of water.

It was a natural lake, to which, like the Devil's Punch-bowl, the people in the neighbourhood assigned no depth.

Around it were high trees with wide-spreading boughs, where heavy shade made cool refreshing retreats around the water, even in the hottest day.

"This is jolly," cried Marland, as he flung himself down amid the cool grass at the side of his new friend. "This is jolly, and no mistake."

"Yes; it's better than the dusty playground," said Tom Rattlebrain. "I wish I'd never seen it."

"You're not the only one who is of that opinion," cried Marland, "but I suppose we have both to do the same thing—put up with it."

At this moment there was a rustle among the undergrowth, and as they turned to see what was the matter they saw two young girls emerge from beneath the trees.

They were both nearly of the same age.

The one who possessed fair hair, however, was slightly older than the other one—whose tresses were of a rich brown tint, and whose figure was of a plumper and rounder mould than her companion.

The two lads gazed curiously to see what could be the object of the visit of the two young girls to so lonely a spot.

Their curiosity was soon gratified.

Descending to the margin of the water, they rounded a little eminence on which stood a peculiar looking structure, and drew from behind it a light skiff.

Into this with many a laugh and playful gesture they entered, and pushed off presently upon the still bosom of the lake.

"They are daring young ladies," said Tom Rattlebrain; "if there were another boat in the vicinity I should much like to follow them and see where they are going."

"They cannot come to much harm in such a place as this," cried Maynard; "it is as smooth as a piece of glass, and they seem to row easily and fearlessly."

Tom Rattlebrain laughed.

"Ah," he said, "you know more about the neighbourhood than I do, and yet you know nothing of the secret of this lake."

"You are a romantic fellow," exclaimed Marland, "A secret, why how can there be a secret connected with such a place as this?"

"There is then or else I am much mistaken," said Tom. "Listen and I will tell you."

"Fire away then," cried Marland, still keeping his eyes upon the lake.

"Well, then, the water of the lake is, as you see, not absolutely still."

"Yes."

"It wells up from the bowels of the earth, and it dashes away down towards the Drayford—through underground caves and passages which human beings have never traversed."

"Any boat that approaches the spot where this rush of water takes place will be sucked down as it were into a whirlpool and—"

"Bother your whirlpool!" exclaimed Marland. "See, Tom, there is another boat. Let's have a bit of fun, and row after them."

"Done," exclaimed Tom Rattlebrain, springing up from the greensward; "it'll be hot work, but more excitement than lying here in the shade."

Running down the steep incline they soon reached the boat-bure.

In a few moments a tiny craft was pushed off from the margin of the little lake, and away the two light-hearted lads sped over the smooth surface of the water.

The sun was just setting in the west.

A pleasant glow was on the bosom of the lake, and a light breeze was moving it into tiny wavelets.

There was that in the air which imparted elasticity to the spirits, and with light laughter and merry jests the boys sped away in pursuit of the two girls.

The latter entered at once into the spirit of the fun, and with a loud laugh they exerted themselves to the utmost to surpass their pursuers.

But suddenly there was a cry, and the hearts of the two lads almost stood still as they saw the skiff which contained their unknown friends whirling round and round in the eddying waters.

"See, see," exclaimed Tom Rattlebrain, excitedly, "did I not tell you rightly—is there not a whirlpool in the lake?"

"Yes, and they are in terrible danger," said Marland, "let us row quickly to the rescue."

As he spoke the words the two girls became alarmed.

Seeing their danger, they ceased rowing, and started up.

In an instant they had capsized the boat, and were struggling for life in the water.

The boys lost no time.

Their little skiff dashed swiftly towards the scene of action, and soon they had reached it.

But there a difficulty had presented itself.

One of the young girls was struggling in the centre of the whirlpool, while the other was rapidly nearing the edge of the eddying water.

"What is to be done?" cried Marland.

"Save yonder one," exclaimed Tom Rattlebrain, and without a thought of the danger, he plunged headlong into the water.

Marland seized the oars, and pulled at once towards the drowning girls.

Meanwhile Tom Rattlebrain was battling with the whirling waters.

It was as much as he could do with all his art as a swimmer to keep himself straight among the eddies.

But he went on resolutely.

He could see the white face, surrounded by the floating brown tresses. He could see the agonized eyes full of wild entreaty, and his heart was nerved with more than pity.

On and on he sped until he was within a yard of the drowning girl.

His arm was outstretched to seize her, when she uttered one piercing cry.

Then the waters rolled over her, and she disappeared.

A deadly feeling entered the heart of Tom Rattlebrain as she did so, as if something had suddenly gone out of the world.

The lovely face of the young girl had already made an impression upon him, and he felt as if he would save her or die in the attempt.

Throwing himself on his back, he began floating about, snuffing himself to be whirled round and round in the great eddies.

He had not remained thus many moments before the form of the young girl appeared once more on the surface, and turning on his side he at once made for her.

It was an instant's work to rush to her and clasp her in his arms.

Then he made all haste he could towards the skiff, into which Marland was already dragging the fair-haired girl.

They were both dreadfully exhausted, and could not utter a word.

They fell into each other's arms, and then, sobbing violently, they remained until the shore was reached.

Then each supporting one of them, the boys led them towards the little inn which, as they knew, stood on the slope of the High Hills.

Here having ascertained that their names were Esther and Ruth Masterton, the daughters of farmer Masterton, of The Grange, they left them in care of the landlord's wife, and prepared in the dusk of the evening to return to the school.

They had nearly reached it, and were in fact close to its high towers, when Tom suddenly stopped.

"I say, Marland," he said, "I think we've behaved very badly to the two girls."

"How so?" asked Marland.

"Why—we've left them up at the inn, and to get home they'll have to cross the woods on the other side of the High Hills," returned Tom.

"I suppose they've often done it before," said Marland, who began to see what Tom was aiming at.

"No doubt; but not at night," said Tom, "unless, indeed, their father has no respect for them. The place, they say, is full of tramps and gipsies."

"What do you want to do then?" said Marland.

"To return to the inn, escort them home to the farm, and make the acquaintance of the old farmer," cried Tom Rattlebrain.

"And then," he added, with a laugh, "who knows that old Masterton will not ask us to pay him a visit? Come on—let's start back at once."

Marland hesitated.

"It is hazardous work," said he.

"What! are you afraid of the tramps?" said Tom, sneeringly. "I'm not. We'll cut two stout ash sticks from one of the hedges, and then we'll be good enough for the cowardly vagrants."

"I don't mean that I fear them," said his companion; "I'm thinking of the fearful row we shall get in with the old doctor. But there—I'm not going to be behindhand. I'll come with you."

Tom Rattlebrain threw his hat in the air with delight.

"That's right," he cried; "you're one of the right sort. We'll tell the doctor the whole truth, and then if he gives us a whacking he's a brute."

With these words he turned, and the two lads were soon hurrying away on their return journey.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE OLD RUINED CASTLE.

It was quite dark when the two young adventurers reached the inn.

The surprise of the landlord was great, but both the young ladies were delighted at the prospect of being escorted through the dark wood which they so much feared.

They had been promised the escort of Sam Coggles, the ostler's boy, but as he was a well-known coward, he had presented anything in their eyes but the appearance of a champion.

However, as three were better than two, Sam was ordered to accompany the two friends, and away they went at length in the hope of reaching the farm about nine.

Nothing happened on their way to interfere with their onward progress.

The tramps and gipsies appeared to have vacated their usual haunts, and not a sound disturbed the woods, but the brushing noise of the wide-spreading trees, and the chirping of the birds of night.

They reached the Grange Farm in due course, and were welcomed gladly by old Masterton.

They were pressed to stop to supper, but after taking a glass of home-brewed ale each and receiving an invitation to come whenever they liked, they began their way homewards.

Sam Coggles was in that state of mind that he could not speak more than in monosyllables.

Every hair in his red shock head bristled, as they entered the wood, and he was afraid, in fact, to hear the sound of his own voice.

Tom Rattlebrain and young Marland, however, kept up an incessant buzz of conversation, and were, indeed, so occupied with their own affairs that it was not until they had reached the precincts of the old ruined castle in the centre of the wood, that they began to notice that there were unexpected lights among the trees.

The ruins were those of a most ancient building, which dated away, years upon years, in the past, and strange rumours were about respecting it.

In the neighbourhood it was said that a ghost was always seen there on certain nights—the ghost of a lady murdered by her husband in the wood.

Sam Coggles knew this legend well, and he got close up to his heavier companions as he neared it.

Suddenly he uttered a yell of horror, and clutched Tom Rattlebrain by the arm.

"See!—see! the ghost!—the ghost!" he cried, and pointed frantically to the ruins.

Then away he went at a clattering pace along the forest avenue—running with about as much grace and agility as a young elephant, and awakening everywhere the echoes of the forest.

Tom and his friend glanced eagerly in the direction of the ruins, and there, standing on the doorstep was a tall white figure.

It was impossible in the dim light to see whether it was a man or a woman.

Tom Rattlebrain paused a moment.

"Are you afraid of such sights," he said.

"Well," said Marland, "if I thought there was such a thing as a real ghost, I shouldn't like to see it. But I don't believe it."

"No more do I," said Tom Rattlebrain; "it's only some trick. Let's go into the ruins and see what it means."

"But the school?"

"May as well let him hug a sheep as a lamb," said Tom; "come on."

And so, led on by his madcap companion, Marland passed through the trees and proceeded towards the entrance to the ruins.

It was not long before they reached the steps.

The moon, whose light could only be seen dimly in the avenues of the great wood, filtered here through spectral branches and paneless windows upon floors over which had once resounded the tramp of armed men and the pattering of fair feet.

These floors were now broken in innumerable places, while grass and weeds formed between the stones the banquets of noisome things.

Marland shuddered as he entered the dismal place.

"This is scarcely a pleasant spot to visit at night," he said, "but as we're in for it, we'll rout out the ghost whatever it may be. It'll be something to tell the boys."

"Hark! What is that?" cried Tom, as he paused.

A shrill yell—a scream, as of mortal agony, resounded through the old ruins.

It was a cry to make the heart stand still, and even Tom began to think that he had entered perhaps into a rather perilous adventure.

But he was not the one to recede from it.

"That comes from the ghost, I suppose," said he. "Let us ascend the staircase yonder, whence it seems to come from."

Doubting still as to the propriety of what they were doing, Marland followed his daring friend, and they had soon entered on a new phase of adventure.

On the landing there was a lot of slits for windows, looking into a lower room.

From this lower room proceeded the sound of voices, and as the boys peered through they saw a strange and bewildering scene.

Around a chamber, which no doubt had once been splendidly decorated, were stuck a number of torches.

In the centre lay a young woman upon a rude pallet bed.

She was evidently dying.

In the last agony of death in fact.

At her head stood the tall spectral figure which they had seen on the steps of the ruins.

It was the figure of an old woman with long grey hair, a thin, haggard, parchmenty face, and dressed in a white robe, which showed not even the slightest contour of her form.

At her feet kneeling was a man.

A man, one glance at whose features caused the two boys to utter an exclamation of wonder.

It was none other than Jeffery Jordan.

The expression of his features was very different now to what it was in the school-room.

His eyes were fixed with a fond expression upon the young girl, while tears stood in them and dropped upon the white garment, which stretched over her person from head to foot.

"What can he be doing here?" asked Tom Rattlebrain in an undertone.

An undertone, indeed, it was, which very few persons could have heard.

But nevertheless it was.

Hardly had the words left his lips, when a hand seized him by the arm.

"What are you doing here, my kinchin?" he said; "come with me—no resistance, or—"

He held a knife aloft, and Tom Rattlebrain, brave as he was, saw that it would be useless to resist.

More especially as, in another moment, there glided up out of the darkness two shadowy and spectral figures.

The forms of other gipsies.

"Seize the other kinchin," cried the one who had grasped the arm of Tom Rattlebrain, "and hurry them off to the vaults."

Tom Rattlebrain thought it high time to interfere.

"Excuse me," he said, "but we were not here for any harm. We simply came here to look around us any see if the stories of ghosts were true. If you let us go we will not interfere in any way, and will not say a word of what we have seen."

The man laughed as he swung him down the steps.

"Yes, my young covey, we know all about that," he cried; "but we don't trust you. No—you have got to come with us until you can find some one to go bail for you."

"There's one not very far away who would do that," exclaimed Tom Rattlebrain, "the man who is in there—Jeffery Jordan."

"The artful young thief," said the gipsy, "but ye see, my shaver, there's no such person in the vault there as Jeffery Jordan. Come on—and no resistance, or it will be the worse for you."

"There was nothing for it to obey."

They had no weapons but their ash sticks, and in the spot where they were they could not use them against men armed with knives.

So there was nothing for it but to go with their captors, and when they reached the wood they were seized by four others of the gipsy tribe, and while their former enemies hastened back to the ruins their new enemies, who were even of a more repulsive type than the others, dragged them along the forest avenues: and with fearful threats if they did not keep silence proceeded towards a gipsy encampment.

The encampment was situated on the edge of a running stream, which now glistened brightly in the moonlight.

A fire, too, sent its red glow over the wavelets and over the strangely shaped huts, and the gnarled tree trunks, and the figures of young and old sitting weirdlike watching the preparations for the nightly meal.

"What am I to do here?" cried Tom Rattlebrain; "I have done nothing that I should be your prisoner."

"Shut your clappers and go in there," cried the man.

And with a savage push he pitched one after another into one of the arched huts, and pegged down the canvass in front of it.

"Now then, Seth and Japhet," he said to two lads, to whom he delivered a pistol each, "now then, keep good watch there, and if you see any attempt at escape, fire, kill, and spare not."

"Right, Rollo," said one of the lads, a brown-skinned curly-headed son of the forest, "right, Rollo. We will keep good watch, fear not; these boys came from the school-house where the boys are who insulted and drove nearly to death our brother Manassi."

"Good!" said Rollo, "good! I am now returning to the ruins."

He then stopped, spoke a few words to an old hag that was bending near the fire, and hurried away in the darkness.

And there beneath the shelter of the canvas the two lads were left.

"What's to be done now," asked Tom in a cheery voice.

"I don't know," growled Marland, "I haven't the slightest idea of anything except that you've got both of us in a pretty considerable scrape."

"Yes, and the next thing is to get out of it."

"Which we can't do."

"Keep quiet, I have an idea," said Tom, "let me work it, and when I say hold do so."

Marland laughed in spite of himself.

"Well, you are properly named Rattlebrain," he cried, "what's your idea?"

"A fire."

"A fire! what do you mean?"

"You see this straw?"

"Yes."

"And this canvas?"

"Yes."

"Well, they will both burn like tinder," said Tom Rattlebrain. "I shall set fire to them, and when there is a disturbance in the encampment we can bolt."

"Very well, said Marland, "I'm game. Anything better, in fact, than being stuck in this place."

There was no conversation after this.

The words that had been spoken had been uttered in an undertone, and the lads waited patiently as they heard a great noise without: the confusion of many voices and the hurrying of many feet.

Tom Rattlebrain took out his knife.

With this he cut a hole in the canvas covering. He saw at once that—for some reason or another—the old women and young too had vacated their places by the fire, and the only persons left to guard them were the two lads and an old man, who was lying at full length near the tent, if so it might be called.

"Now then, said Tom, "watch for me, and when I cry out, follow."

There was quietness now for a few moments in the tent.

Then, as quietly as possible, Tom struck a match.

This he, without hesitation or thought of danger, applied to the straw and hurled at the bottom of the tent.

In an instant all was in a blaze.

A loud crackling was heard, and then, through the canvas covering, there shot up a bright blaze, which illuminated the scene everywhere around, and caused the gipsies to spring to their feet in astonishment.

Now was the time.

"Come," cried Tom.

In a moment the small canvas structure—such of it, indeed, as was left—was hurled over, and, followed by a cloud of sparks, the two boys fled into the wood.

They were followed by a rattle of shot.

But they were unhurt.

Away through the woodlands—pursued by the bullets of their foes, and their foes too in person, they rushed till they came near to the bridge over the Brayford.

Here they would have been safe from pursuit, for the gipsy thieves did not care to venture further.

But Marland came to grief.

Not well understanding the locality, he never thought of the logs of wood which were placed here and there to fill up the ruts in the road, and to form stepping-stones, when the waters overflowed their banks.

In his hurry, therefore, he sprawled over one of them, and crashing down upon his face he lay there for an instant in a state of complete insensibility.

As Tom Rattlebrain stooped over the prostrate form of his friend, he heard the quick steps of his pursuers behind.

"Wake up—rouse up, old friend," cried Tom, "our enemies will upon us in a moment."

With no gentle or feeble hand Tom shook his friend, and restored him to consciousness.

And then, ash sticks in hand, they both stood at bay.

The two gipsy lads had not had ammunition to reload with, but they hurled their weapons at their enemies, catching Tom such a blow upon his shoulder that it sent him staggering almost into the river.

But in another moment the two lads from the "Dusthole" were up to their work.

The ash sticks were plied furiously, and their enemies had all to do to keep their own.

The gipsies had their short knives, but of what use were these little weapons against the long sticks wielded so bravely by the boys of "Dustall Academy."

Whack! bang! whack! bang! the sticks fell upon the velvet-coated backs of the gipsies.

And at length the heavy ash stick wielded by Tom Rattlebrain came with a sounding crash upon the scone of Seth, and he fell with a thud to the earth.

The other at once flung his pistol at Marland, catching him on the temple and striking him to his knees.

But the victory was to the "Dustholers."

Tom Rattlebrain was to the fore in a moment.

One whirl of his ash-stick brought the gipsy to the earth.

"Now then, Marland," he cried, as he helped his friend up, "we must off and away. This way! here's the bridge."

"And a nice little kettle of fish you put us both in," said Marland.

"Never mind—it's harder where there's none," cried Tom; "we don't go in for adventure every day, and if I do get a licking—drat it!—it can't be worse than the last."

So off they went, and within a few minutes as it were they had reached the school.

At the gate the porter shook his head wisely.

"Look ye here, young gentlemen," he said, "you'll catch it finely for this."

"All right, old Stick-in-the mud," exclaimed

Tom Rattlebrain, "you won't have to bear it, will you? So let us in—don't have any palaver."

"Now that's what I call ongrateful," cried the old man, "just as I was a thinking how I was to get you into the academy without a row, and—"

"All right, we'll chance the row," said Tom, "and so good night."

They knew well both of them that the principal "emotion" in old Ted Pepper's heart was—rum.

That and "bacca" were his motive powers in life.

And, so far from getting them out of a row, he would have helped them freely into one, and then told the Doctor, if he could only have gained thereby an increase in his amount of rum and tobacco.

"Cuss them young himps!" he muttered, as he toddled off to his quarters, as well as his gonty foot would allow him. "I'll be heven with 'em yet! One thing—praise the pigs! their hides will ache to-morrow!"

Meanwhile, despite the curses that he was groaning out against them, the two boys hastened to the door of the academy.

The serving man opened it, and seeing their pale faces, on which the signs of recent fighting were still visible, he started back.

With him these boys were favorites, and he guessed at once the punishment that in ordinary cases they might expect to receive.

"Why, young gentlemen," he cried, "what have you been up to?"

"Rowing, drowning, fighting, &c.," exclaimed Tom Rattlebrain. "Don't make a figgig of it. Let's go up to our rooms and have done with it."

The man laughed.

"Well, young gentlemen," he said, "you do pretty well as you like with me. But the Doctor is not quite the same. He's sitting in his room waiting for you."

The boys looked at one another aghast.

Not with terror.

But no boy looks forward with much pleasure to the prospect of being flogged.

"Is he very angry?" said Marland, with a wry face. "I don't at all appreciate a whacking when my back is like a sensitive gridiron."

"I don't know," said the man, "but I can't say he looks particularly amiable. However, I don't want to stand here talking. I shall get in a row as well as you."

The boys, with beating hearts, made their way to the room of the Doctor.

Under ordinary circumstances, Tom Rattlebrain was not the sort of boy to have skulked away from a flogging.

But they had both been through extraordinary adventures, and were thoroughly done up.

They found the doctor in his room alone, with a glass of whisky toddy before him and a pipe.

"Come in, my boys—come in," he said, in a cheery voice, "I'm all alone."

This was a warning that he was in a terrible passion.

Whenever he was calm and collected it was a proof that he was in a state of internal effervescence.

"Close the door, and sit down my lads."

They did so.

"And pray may I ask where you have been?"

"Yes, sir, I will tell you all truthfully," said Tom Rattlebrain, "and then perhaps you will forgive us."

The doctor cast a curious look at the speaker.

"Very well; I like the truth," said he; "I will listen carefully."

He said the last word with a peculiar intonation of voice.

But Tom Rattlebrain did not observe it.

He began rapidly and without the least reservation to tell the story of their adventures.

The doctor listened at first indifferently, as if he expected to hear only a recapitulation of some childish folly.

But as he heard more of it he became attentive; his brow became knit, his lips turned deadly white, and his whole manner changed.

"And you mean to tell me," he said, "you mean to tell me positively that Mr. Jeffery Jordan was in the ruins?"

"Yes, sir, I swear it," cried Tom Rattlebrain.

"I do not believe you any more for swearing," said the doctor; "you both saw him, you say?"

"Yes."

"That will do then; go to bed. I quite forgive

you, but take my advice. Another time do not be so gallant to the young ladies. You nearly lost your life twice through them."

The lads retired, nothing displeased with the result of their night's adventure.

They had escaped, indeed, in a way they little expected.

On the following day, in the playground, however, Tom Rattlebrain was accosted by the usher, Jeffery Jordan.

"Young gentleman," he said, "you have a strange faculty of making enemies."

Tom glanced up at him with a defiant look.

"How so, sir?" he cried; "how have I made an enemy now?"

"In me."

"And why?"

"For what you told the doctor last night," replied the usher between his set teeth. "You could have narrated your adventures without bringing your sneaking propensities into play."

"Sneaking!" exclaimed Tom Rattlebrain; "I wasn't aware you were doing anything to be ashamed of."

The tall usher extended his skeleton hand and seized him by the ear.

"Come, none of your insolence," cried he; "I'll not stand it."

"Let go my ear, sir," exclaimed Tom, resolutely, "you know you've no business to threaten me and annoy me because I told my master the truth last night."

The usher, in reply, gave his ear an extra twist.

"Why, you insolent young ruffian," he began. But the sentence was never completed.

Tom Rattlebrain let out with all his force with his right hand and caught the usher full in the region of the wind.

An exclamation of disgust and annoyance escaped the lips of Jeffery Jordan, and he of course released the lad.

But in an instant he recovered himself, and springing forward he endeavoured to seize our hero. But the effort was vain.

In spite of his long arms and his long legs he was no match in activity to Tom, and the young lad with many a laugh dodged hither and thither, until there was a circle round them of merry schoolboys.

Jeffery Jordan had no idea of losing his dignity in this scramble.

So preferring to nurse his revenge until another time he drew back.

"I shall report this to the doctor," he said, and stalked away.

The boys of course dared not show too much their intense delight at the discomfiture of the usher.

But, nevertheless, as he turned his back he was greeted by a roar of laughter.

He did not look round.

In fact, he knew well that among so many it would be impossible to detect the culprits.

He determined, therefore, that his vengeance should fall upon the two lads whom he knew to be his enemies—Tom Rattlebrain and young Marland.

The boys gathered eagerly round the two heroes of the hour, and anxiously demanded the meaning of the scene.

But in vain.

The friends had resolved to say nothing more of the matter; and so with many a laugh and jest they avoided the subject and lapsed into their play once more.

The usher of course did not complain to the doctor.

He knew better than to do so, but all that afternoon, while Tom Rattlebrain was in his class of arithmetic, the usher watched him with eager spitefulness.

But Tom knew how much he was being watched, how every trip would be observed, and he got through his lessons with even more éclat than usual.

On the next day there was a new arrival at the school.

This was a boy of the name of Trencher—a fair-haired, bullet-headed chap of the age of seventeen, with blue eyes and rosy cheeks, but by no means a clever-looking or handsome lad.

He had a most supercilious air about him, and at once claimed friendship with Bill Blantyre.

With him he seemed to be old chums, but to the

others he appeared to think it condescension to speak.

To Tom Rattlebrain he commenced, even after the first few hours, to behave with studied insolence, until at length, when they entered the playground, Tom said,—

"Archie Trencher—I believe that's your name—did you ever have your nose pulled?"

The stout lad with the rosy cheeks eyed him with lofty disdain.

"Go away, you runde fellow," he said; "I was not aware I had come among cads."

"Is that observation applied to me?" said Tom.

"You can take it as such," returned Trencher; "I don't generally say things without meaning."

"Well, that's more than anyone would fancy from your face," replied Tom; "but as I said before, if you have not had your nose pulled, you've come into a stunning place to have a lesson in the art."

"There is one thing you couldn't do," said Trencher, "so be off, and thank your lucky stars I don't give you a hiding."

"That's what I want," cried Tom. "A good licking would do me the world of good, so up with your dukes, my lad. Take your position, and meanwhile, just to give you a little encouragement to fight properly, here's what you're longing for, my hearty."

And with a sudden spring forward, he seized Trencher by the nose and wrung it.

The blood surged up at once into the face of the new boy, and he struck out.

But the blow was ineffectual.

It was caught upon Tom Rattlebrain's arm, and the boys, who had at once greeted the commencement of the combat with eager pleasure, now formed a ring round them.

Tom was far shorter than his antagonist.

But this in his eyes made not the slightest difference.

His hold and daring nature made him utterly reckless as to the size or style of an adversary, and so casting off his jacket and flinging it to Marland to hold, he faced his older and stronger foe.

The fight at once began in earnest.

Right and left Tom Rattlebrain delivered his blows, hitting out straight from the shoulder, and administering such punishment upon the face of Archie Trencher as he never had before.

The result of the battle soon became undoubted.

Tom Rattlebrain was winning in a canter, as the saying is.

Suddenly, however, he was seen to fling up his arms, the blood spouted from his forehead, and he fell prone to the ground.

A cry of horror rose from the lips of all who saw this, and Marland, rushing forward, sank on his knees and raised his friend's head on them.

"Great heavens!" he exclaimed, "some coward has flung a stone and killed him."

It seemed too true.

His forehead was laid open in a deep gash, and he lay speechless and insensible.

The question was, who had thrown the stone?

(To be continued. Commenced in No. 362.)

NEWSPAPER NEWS.—Encouraged, we believe, by the success attending the publication of the *canard* about the "submersion" of Tortola, our daily contemporaries are making arrangements for the "coming off" of the following startling events. Already the leaders destined to "illustrate" the various items of news are in a forward state of preparation, and it is said that abridged copies of Lempriere's Classical Dictionary have, during the last few days, been in very great demand, when the state of the season is taken into consideration:—"Razing of Paris by the Caving in of the Catacombs!" "Submersion of Cambridge by the Overflowing of the Cam!" "Thawing of the North Pole by a Heavy Fire of Thunderbolts!!!" "Overflowing of Edinburgh by an Eruption of the Grampian Hills!!!" "Destruction by Fire of London by a Conflagration of the Thames!!!!!"—*Tomahawk.*

A DEER was shot the other day in New Jersey, not far from Vineland, by an old gentleman of 84. The veteran hunter had walked ten miles that day before coming upon his game.

NAUTICAL YARNS.

BY HARRY HAWSER.

TIT FOR TAT;

OR,

PAYING OUT THE DOCTOR.

HIS majesty's brig *Ariel* was lying at single anchor, at the mouth of a small creek on the west coast of Africa.

It was early in the morning and Doctor Robertson, the brig's surgeon, was walking up and down the quarter deck. A flabby, fat, coarse-looking man he was.

With his hands folded over his round pot-belly, he strutted up and down the quarter-deck.

Suddenly a whizzing sound was heard, and a large wet swab,* falling from aloft landed right across the Doctor's gross features.

Dashing the swab down upon the dock, the irate surgeon looked up aloft to endeavour and discover whence the missile had been discharged.

There with a grin upon his mischievous countenance, was a midshipman of the name of Spicer, gazing over the edge of the maintop.

From certain private reasons, Robertson had no doubt that he was the offender. He turned aft to complain to the officer of the watch.

"Insolent young scoundrel, young Harry Spicer—just dropped a swab right on to my face—must have been done on purpose—could not have been an accident."

At this moment, the youngster of whom he was complaining, made his appearance on deck by the expeditious method of sliding down the topmast backstay.

"Oa I am so sorry," began the middy, "I really couldn't help it, sir. I was passing the swab over to the captain of the top, and it—"

"Don't you believe it, Mr. Short," interrupted the glowing surgeon; "I am positively certain that it was done on purpose."

"To what reason, then, do you attribute his conduct, Doctor Robertson," enquired the lieutenant.

"Why simply out of revenge, because the other day he came to me with a headache, and—and—"

Here the doctor began to see that he was confessing too much, and wished to leave off.

"Well, doctor, what happened then," said Short.

"Why. Well, I caught him laughing at me behind my back, so I made his draught very nanseous with Tinct. Jalapæ and Aloe Bark, as a punishment, and now I'm quite certain he has done this in return."

"What do you say to this, Mr. Spicer?" enquired the lieutenant endeavouring to keep his countenance.

"Why, sir, what the doctor says he has done, may be true enough, but the matter of the swab was entirely an accident, sir, I can assure you, and there's Johnson, the captain of the top, will say the same, sir."

At this a strapping young seaman stepped forward and removing his straw hat smoothed down his hair, while exclaiming "That it were, sir, I can take my afterdayer, that the young genelman didn't go for to do it, sir."

"I shall let it pass as an accident this time, but take care, Mr. Spicer, how such a thing occurs again."

"Thankee, sir, I will," returned the middy as turning away he made the best of his road below.

"Too bad upon my word," muttered the angry doctor, "to be insulted in this manner, and with impunity too. By Heavens if he comes into the sick list he shall know it."

So saying he also disappeared to attend to the unfortunates under his charge in the sick bay.

After breakfast a big canoe came alongside the brig, and a grey-headed negro who was sitting in the sternsheets mounted the side and came on board.

Standing in the gangway he went through several motions with his arms and looked very much as if he wanted to say something.

Seeing this Captain Rattler sent for the head man of a dozen of *Kroomen* they had on board, hoping that he might be able to understand the old nigger's lingo.

All men of war on the coast of Africa, take a certain number of natives on board, termed *Kroomen*.

They are employed in doing the dirty work, and in the sun, where work would mean death for a European.

Most of them speak a little English, some better than others, and they are generally speaking, remarkably useful. Rattler always used to call them "the tame niggers."

Presently this head man made his appearance. Tom Toby was his name, and in a short time he was in the middle of a conversation with the stranger.

After about half-an-hour of hard talking in more

began to tell upon the fat doctor, and puffing and blowing, between the intervals of mopping the perspiration from his face he jerked out, "upon my word—one need be in good training—this pace is terrific—I'm perspiring all over—pocket handkerchief's no use—"

"Oh, sir, you want that swab that you threw away yesterday," exclaimed Harry Spicer.

"All right youngster—wait a hit—my turn'll come—wait till you're on the sick list again."

After they had been walking for about a couple of hours, they came within eight of a big mud wall, which surrounded a lot of mud huts, and that the old negro pointed out with a great deal of pride as "Little Berebee." A wide ditch was outside the wall, which was full of dirty green water, while two wide gates appeared to be the only means of entrance.

The town was so full of people, that in the distance it looked as if it were swarming with flies.

When Robertson saw the number of natives and how completely the party once in the city would be in their power, he turned a sallow leaden colour.

"Don't you think, Captain Rattler," said he, "that we had better remain outside."

"No, doctor, certainly not," answered Rattler, "why do you ask? Haven't you brought your medicine chest with you? Pooh, pooh, man, I'd take that place in ten minutes, with my coat's crew."

Tom Toby here interrupted and informed the officers that all the people were in the city on account of it being the grand feast of the year. It was called the "feast of Coral," and there was to be "Big Fetish."

When the party arrived opposite the gates, they were thrown open, and they all marched in.

There were the six officers first with Tom Toby, and the nigger swell, then came the boat's crew with their muskets on their shoulders, while the rear was brought up with swarms of curious and inquisitive niggers.

The road was a broad one leading from the gates to a kind of open square, or market place.

In this open square was the king seated upon a raised platform, while just behind him

were standing over a hundred women.

These the officers were informed through Tom Toby were the king's wives. The old negro who had acted as guide, now threw himself upon his face; and beckoned to Rattler to do the same. But the captain was the wrong sort of man for that. He had brought some more buttons and tobacco, which he handed up to his majesty.

The king, who, if he excelled in nothing else, was certainly one of the ugliest men in the city, was evidently pleased with the present.

He grunted, grinned like a satyr, and then nodded his head.

After that the party were conducted to seats near the platform, and were able to take a good look round.

Right in the middle of the square was a huge wooden image of an alligator, in front of which had been dug a wide and deep pit.

Between the alligator and the pit were standing two gigantic negroes, each of them over six feet in height, and armed with large double-edged swords.

Tom Toby explained that this wooden image was the God of the Coral, and there was to be a big sacrifice to him, before the feast, conducted by the two negroes under the orders of the priests.

The priests now made their appearance out of small hut, by the side of the square. They were all dressed in white, and were occupied in making noise enough to frighten crows away.

It was a species of singing, but, alas, for the harmony.

They fell in two deep all round the alligator, leaving only the front open.

Then from out of another hut were led the victims who were to become the sacrifices.



THE CAPITAL OF KING BERELEE.

than one sense of the word, it appeared that a king of a native town, a little way inland, named Little Berebee, had sent an invitation to the white men to be present at a grand feast and palaver he was going to hold on the next day, which was to terminate in a gigantic hunt.

When Tom Toby had translated all this Rattler was very much pleased, for he was a thoroughbred sportsman, and although he had often heard of a native hunt, yet he had never taken part in one.

It appeared that the old negro who had brought the message was a big swell at home, but at the same time he was not above accepting a "dash" as they term it of several old brass buttons and a pound of tobacco.

"Dash" on the West Coast of Africa is similar to "Backsheesh" in Turkey and the East.

It was agreed when the old man left the brig, that the party who accepted the invitation should be ashore by daybreak the next morning.

The captain, the first lieutenant, the doctor and three junior officers, of whom Harry Spicer was one, made up the party of officers, and by way of precaution Rattler determined to take his armed boat's crew.

The next morning the men were all ready long before sunrise, laughing and cracking their jokes as if there was no such thing as a poisoned arrow in Africa.

When they reached the landing place, the old negro and a lot of others, who appeared to constitute a guard of honour, were waiting for them.

Tom Toby was added to the party as interpreter, and with the natives in front they all started off into the bush.

After half-an-hour's smart walking the pace

* A swab is a description of nautical mop without a wooden handle, and made of rope yarn.

Their hands were tied behind their backs, and on each side of one marched an armed negro.

An immense noise of tom toms, or native drums, now commenced, and keeping time to this rough music, the poor fellows marched slowly round the square. In a few minutes the one who led the procession arrived opposite the alligator. The negro standing on the right raised his sword, swung it round his head, and with one blow the victim was decapitated, his body falling into the pit.

The next one was treated in a similar manner by the other negro, and so they went on.

Suddenly one of the sacrifices, who happened to be just passing by the party from the *Ariel*, tripped up the guard on that side and sprang into the midst of them.

Approaching Rattler, he said, in broken English: I am Portuguese, you are English sailor, you will save my life."

And on looking at him the captain could perceive that he was not a negro. Although he was somewhat dark, yet he had not the African features.

Directly the priests saw that one of the sacrifices had made his escape they set up a terrific shrieking, and followed by a large number of armed niggers they started towards the English party as if to recapture him.

"All right, my man, we'll protect you," said Rattler to the Portuguese; then he added, "Now, my boys, we must get out of this, there's no time to be lost. Double quick!"

And in another minute the whole party were running as hard as they could to the gate.

But just as they got close up to it the guards, guessing something was wrong, closed and barred it.

"Follow me," sang out the Portuguese; and turning sharp to the right he made towards a portion of the wall that appeared to be rather lower than the rest, and therefore easier to get over.

And upon arriving at it they found that it was still too big to be jumped without assistance.

"Quick, boys," shouted Rattler; "Drag that bullock waggon alongside."

In another minute the clumsy conveyance was under the wall, and with its assistance it was easy to surmount.

But just then a band of a couple of dozen negroes came round a corner and commenced putting their arrows to their bows.

"Now, my mon, take good aim," exclaimed Rattler. "Don't throw a shot away."

"Fire!"

The natives were evidently not accustomed to firearms.

Some of them fell flat on their faces, while others shrieked and fled behind the nearest huts. Seven of them were either killed or wounded.

Then it was every man for himself, and it was wonderful to see the agility shown in getting over that wall.

Great was the enjoyment of the men and the midwives at the unhappy position of the doctor.

As we have observed before, he was extremely fat, and in vain he endeavoured to climb the wall.

Panting and perspiring with fear he would make a gigantic effort, and then tumble over backwards.

At length they were all over him the doctor, and the negroes had plucked up courage and were coming on again.

Reinvigorated by his fear Robertson made a tremendous effort, and landed just upon the top of the wall.

At that moment a nigger made a lunge with his spear at the doctor's "fairest mark."

He gave a howl and tumbled right over into the ditch the other side.

It certainly helped him over the wall, but from the grunts and groans he gave vent to for fear the medico did not appreciate the native assistance.

He managed to climb up the side of the ditch, and then seeing another band of natives approaching he fainted from pure "funk."

Four of the bluejackets picked him up and carried him, and you may be sure they didn't lose the opportunity of paying him out for some old scores. Many a nauseous draught and unnecessary bolus, filthy powder, and purging pill was recolected and repaid during that march.

Another volley sent the approaching band of na-

tives to the right about, and our little band gained the protection of the bush.

Now commenced the doctor's purgatory.

Every time his carriers came near a prickly cactus or mimosa bush he was lowered a little bit so that his stem might just touch the prickles or thorns.

Many a howl and naughty word did he make use of, but everybody was in such a hurry to get down to the boat that no notice was paid to his complaints.

They at length arrived at the landing place without a further meeting with the natives, and got safely on board.

The Portuguese said that he had belonged to a trading schooner that had been wrecked off the coast, and all hands lost but himself.

The *Ariel* sailed the next day, and the Portuguese was landed at Tenerife.

For nearly a month Dr. Robertson was unable to sit down without making an ugly face, and at last he was so chaffed by his messmates with regard to his "courage," "honourable tears," "wounds received in battle," &c., that, much to everybody's delight, he took the opportunity of exchanging with another medico at Tenerife, and the *Ariels* were once more happy.

FRANK'S FREAKS AT THE FINISHING SCHOOL.

CHAPTER XXVII.

MURDER.

"BUT you cannot blame me if the news be b.d. I did not make it."

"No; just help yourself to a glass of grog, while I consider the matter over."

Reuben Ashcroft accepted the invitation, and thus managed to get nearer the old man.

"And they ran the cargo to-morrow night, do they?" said the lieutenant.

"Yes," replied Reuben, "and they said it was finest French brandy."

"Good, my men shall be there to meet them. I suppose the smugglers are strong?"

"Very, all picked men, and terribly desperate," replied Reuben unwarily.

"So, so, Master Reuben Ashcroft," sneered the lieutenant, "did they tell you that also?"

Reuben turned a little pale, for he found he had said too much.

"The reason why I say that," he hastened to explain, "was that the tall sailor said that if you did happen to discover their secret, they would fight to the last, and conquer or die."

"Brave fellows, picky fellows, Master Reuben Ashcroft," sneered the lieutenant.

"I do not understand you," replied Reuben. "I expected thanks, not insult for my news."

"Don't understand me? Do you not think that these sailors were fools to say so much before you?"

"But do I not tell you that I pretended to be asleep, and that they spoke Dutch?"

"But why need they have spoken at all?" said the lieutenant, "especially in a public-house."

"That I cannot say," said Reuben, sulkily; "I have told you the truth, I can do no more."

"Oho, boys, why you are losing your temper," laughed the lieutenant, "that won't make me believe you."

"I have told you the truth," cried Reuben fiercely, "do you dare to call me a liar?"

"Dare! what do you mean by that, sir?" demanded the lieutenant angrily.

"Look here, Lieutenant Grogum," cried Reuben Ashcroft, "I am a man as well as you."

"Ho! ho! ho!" shouted Grogum, "here is another piece of valuable news—he is a man."

"Damn it, sir!" said Reuben passionately, "do you mean to laugh at me?"

"That's it—that's just what I do mean to do," crowed the lieutenant delightedly.

"By heavens! you shall repent this insult," cried Ashcroft, white with passion.

"Hark ye, my Dandy Boatman," cried the lieutenant sternly, "I have had enough of this."

"And so have I," cried Reuben Ashcroft, drawing his breath fiercely and quickly.

"And now I will tell you my news," said

Grogum. "I do know all about the Cutthroat Creek gang."

"How was it to know that?" cried Reuben, getting nearer the lieutenant, "how should I?"

"You did not know it, or I doubt if you would be here. I also know that one Reuben Ashcroft is their leader."

"How!" cried Reuben, starting back in amazement, "me a leader of smugglers?"

"Neither more nor less," laughed the lieutenant, "and the respectable Mr. Toddles, the undertaker, is your lieutenant. I know that your ship, the *Firefly*, is about to run a cargo, or is running one now."

"It is false!" exclaimed Reuben; "if it were true, do you think I would be here?"

"I do not know your reasons, but what I do know is this, your gang will soon be in my power."

"I tell you I have nothing to do with any gang," cried Ashcroft, pale with terror.

"And I tell you you have. Do you know one Silas Slime, eh, my Dandy Boatman, do you?"

"I have met him," replied Reuben Ashcroft, in a low, tremulous voice—"what of him?"

"Well, that kind young gentleman has betrayed the gang. Here is his letter with all the names."

"The mean, wretched scoundrel!" gasped Reuben Ashcroft; "oh! that I had his throat in my grasp."

"But you have not got it. To-morrow you and your friends will all be in prison for piracy, mark that. As far as I can make out, your crimes have been more than ordinary smuggling."

"By heavens! that shall never be," cried Reuben, suddenly bringing out a stiletto and springing towards the lieutenant.

Swift as lightning the lieutenant had drawn a pistol from under his pillow, and presented it at Reuben.

"Ha! ha! you murderous scoundrel," he cried, "I am prepared for you, you see."

Reuben Ashcroft staggered back against the table, where he leaned for support.

"Put down that weapon," cried Lieutenant Grogum, "or I will let daylight through you."

As he spoke the lieutenant tried to crawl out of his hammock.

This movement left Reuben Ashcroft at liberty to make an attack on his enemy.

He at once seized on the opportunity, and sprang upon the lieutenant.

His arm was raised to strike, but at that instant poor old Poll rushed forward to save her master, and the dagger was instantly buried in her heart.

With a low, piteous wail, the old woman sank lifeless at her master's feet.

But now another combatant appeared upon the scene of carnage and strife.

It was Mungo, Lieutenant Grogum's faithful old friend and companion—his dog Margo.

With a low growl, the dog flew forward, and seized upon the Dandy Boatman's throat.

"Curse the dog!" he exclaimed, as he threw it off. "Shall such a creature ruin me?"

"Hold on!" roared the lieutenant. "Hold on, Mungo, I'm here, old boy. Keep tight hold of the murdering rascal whilst I blow his brains out. Good dog—good dog! Only wait till I get my pistols ready—that is all. Ha! ha! ha! we will have him then."

At that moment Reuben Ashcroft heard a shout in the garden, where, with the reader's permission, we will at once proceed.

Carrying out his plan of alarming the lieutenant, Frank hauled his friend Ted off to alarm the school, and from the school the town, so that they might at once attack these men, the smugglers of the *Firefly*, and discover them at their nefarious work.

Frank had less scruple in this, inasmuch as he knew that smuggling was the least thing in the matter.

The men who had taken the run of Cutthroat Creek were not men who simply gained their living by smuggling, but were willing to enter into the most nefarious crimes possible.

He hurried down the path that led to the lieutenant's house as fast as he could.

"I had better not keep to the path," he muttered. "I will make my way across the grass: that is the shortest way, and I feel convinced that no time should be lost."

He dashed along as fast as possible, and at last arrived at the lieutenant's house.

What was that?

A man leaning down by the window, gazing through the shutters?

The man speaking—yes, speaking—in low fiendish tone to himself.

Frank stooped down, and listened to what the man said.

"Ha! ha!" he cried: "this is the game I like. Ho, ho! he has got the lieutenant now. No, the lieutenant has him. Confusion! the lieutenant has his pistols. Ha! Reuben Ashcroft is foiled—foiled! See! he retreats! Well, well, why don't the lieutenant kill him? There, there, now's his chance; he can get him now he turns to get out of his hammock. Now, now—now is the time! Ah! the old woman rushes forward. He strikes her down. Bravo! bravo! Now for the lieutenant!"

"Villain!" cried Frank, springing forward, "I have you now. You are the man who tortured me in the vaults. It is no use struggling; you shall not escape me. Yield at once!"

"Unhand me, hoy!" cried Toddles. "Fool! you are holding me back whilst murder is going on!"

"Murder!" cried Frank, in alarm. "Murder! Where?"

"The lieutenant is being murdered by Reuben Ashcroft, the Dandy Boatman."

"Reuben Ashcroft!" said Frank screaming in horror. "Is it possible?"

"Yes—yes! I am old, very old, or I would have interfered. I did call for help. Did you not hear me? He has killed the old woman, I believe. For heaven's sake, break in the window, and save the lieutenant!"

Frank did not pause for a moment, but dashed forward to the window.

He had scarcely reached it, when the shutters were thrown open, and the window smashed to pieces.

A man sprang out on the lawn, and struck Frank down. There were two sharp reports of a pistol, and the next moment Frank felt himself collared.

"So, so!" cried Grognum, "I have caught one of you at last, have I? You wretched, murdering thieves! My poor old Poll, too? But you shall all swing for it, that you shall! I will see her avenged."

"Lieutenant Grognum," cried Frank, "you are mistaken. I came here to assist you. Heaven knows it was not my wish to do you any harm. Now I see the folly of the practical jokes I have played. But whilst you are holding me, the men who have committed the crime will escape."

"What, Frank Ferndale?" cried the lieutenant, "How the deuce did you come here?"

"Lieutenant Grognum, whilst we talk here your poor old housekeeper may be dying. Let us go to her at once. Not only can I prove my innocence, but I will also let you know all about the men who would, had they been able to carry out their evil designs, have murdered you. I will also explain to you the mystery of Cuthroat Creek. If you will come with me I can place in your hands the greatest set of scoundrels that ever trod. But now look to your housekeeper."

"You are right," said the lieutenant. "Poor old Poll! Who'd have thought that after living so many years, she would have died out of her bed? Dear me, this world's an awful rum place! I never knew before that murder—that is, seeing another person murdered—was a cure for the gout. But it must be, for I can toddle on now as well as possible."

They clambered through the window, and went up to the poor old housekeeper.

Mungo, the dog, lay stretched by her side. A blow from the Dandy Boatman's dagger having killed her.

"Both of them have slipped their cables," sighed the lieutenant, "and I think I might as well have gone with them also. Faith! it's a bad luck that will come to me now they are gone. Poor old Poll! She nursed me ever since I was a boy, and I've nursed Mungo ever since she was a pup, and now they are both cold and dead—cold and dead!"

Here the lieutenant, who did not see the absurdity of his assertion that Poll had nursed him ever since he was a baby, and that he had nursed the dog ever since it was a pup, wiped his eye, on which the spray of the sad sea of affliction had gathered.

"Ah! lad," he continued, as he saw Frank bending over the dead woman, and trying to listen

to the beat of her heart, "it's no good listening there. Poll's out of soundings; the pumps won't work."

"What can be done?" said Frank. "It seems so horrible to leave them here, and yet we must do so."

"Faith! I don't know what to do. I'm clean out of all reckonings, and feel as useless as a ship without a rudder. Youngster, you must take the lead here. I only want to get one grip at that infernal fiend, Reuben Ashcroft, and then I'll haul down my colours, and make all sail to that part where storms are unknown, and all ships well found can ride safely at anchor."

"There is but one thing to be done," said Frank, "and that is to lock up the house, and go at once to the admirals. He is a magistrate. Already my friend, Ted Tranquil, will have been in the town, and warned the police, as well as informing Dr. McDermoc. We shall find all the people on the alert, and ready for action."

"Ted Tranquil! Why, what does he know of this affair?" cried Grognum.

"Nothing of this affair; but he has been with me to Cuthroat Creek, where we saw the smugglers land their casks of spirits, and heard that you were to be murdered. It was to alarm you that I came here, while Ted rushed to give the alarm, that these wretches might be taken."

"My fools of men let these fellows escape, and two days found them out," groined the lieutenant.

"It is no use complaining, lieutenant," said Frank, "we must get to work now; where are your arms?"

"There are plenty of them," said the lieutenant, going to a cupboard and taking therefrom a sword.

"There is a sword for you, and here are a pair of pistols. I will load mine, and then we will be off."

"Only to think that poor Poll should be lying cold and—well, she was deaf and dumb before, so that death perhaps don't matter so much to her. Ah, me! it is very, very sad."

They were soon ready, and closing the window carefully, hurried off to the admirals.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

HOW THEY PLANNED THE ATTACK.—THE FIGHT IN CUTHROAT CREEK.—THE VAULTS ON FIRE.—THE TOWER TAKEN.—THE ESCAPE.

WHEN Frank and Grognum arrived at the admirals they found all in commotion.

Old Portfire was in his full uniform, and had all his servants armed to the teeth.

Besides this, a strong body of police were there, all armed with pistols and cutlasses, whilst in the kitchen were the preventive men fortifying themselves for the coming struggle with good strong ale.

"Ah! Grognum," cried the admiral, "we were just about to send down to you. Heaven knows what is up now—a day. If what Master Tranquil tells us be true, there will be hard work to-night. A regular cutting-out expedition. Hillo! Master Frank, I understand you were the one who went to work to find these fellows out. We all owe you our thanks, for if it had not been for you murder might have been done."

"I fear me, admiral, that my services were much too late, for murder has been done."

"Murder!" cried the admiral. "Who has been killed?"

In a few brief words Frank and the lieutenant related what had happened at the lieutenant's house; how the Dandy Boatman and Mr. Toddles had made their escape, and also how there could be little doubt that they had sought a refuge amongst the smugglers at Cuthroat Creek.

"In the first place," said the admiral, "this undertaker's house must be seized."

"I will see to that," said the inspector of police. "I will send three or four of my men down at once."

"And now I think we had all better march down to the Creek," said the admiral.

"Pardon me," said Frank, "but I think you had better divide your men into three divisions."

"Three divisions," exclaimed the admiral. "And what should we do that for?"

"Because I fancy that the three outlets of these water-rats will be well guarded, and that they ought to be attacked at the same time. By doing this we shall be sure to take all."

"The three outlets?" said Lieutenant Grognum, "and which do you call the three outlets?"

"The Church, the Tower, and Cuthroat Creek, they all lead to one passage, I am sure."

"I think you are right," said the admiral, with a grin of approval.

"If we go by the Creek alone, these rascals will retreat by the Church and by the Tower."

"Right you are, lad," cried Lieutenant Grognum, "and if we set about it quickly, we can stop up all their holes, and catch them beautifully. If I could only get alongside that murdering villain Reuben Ashcroft, he should not escape me. If I don't avenge old Poll and dear old Mungo, why my name is not Grognum, that's all."

It was soon decided that Lieutenant Grognum should lead the attack on the Creek.

Frank was to accompany him, as he knew the way to the smugglers' place.

The admiral, accompanied by Tranquil, was to lead the attack on the Tower, whilst the police, led on by the inspector and Tom Truck, who seemed to enjoy the sport with great glee, were to take possession of the Church, so that none of the gang should escape from the vaults.

"But look here, lieutenant," cried Admiral Portfire, who, now that he had once more got the sword belt round his loins, felt the wonted fire of his youth burn up again, and once more took command, "but look here, lieutenant, the attack on the tower and the creek must be made at the same time. Now, when I arrive at the tower, all you fellows will be at your stations, because it takes much longer to go to the tower than to the creek or church."

"Very true," replied the lieutenant; "now, what sign shall we have that you are there?"

"Why, I will let off a rocket, and that will be the signal for attack."

This being agreed upon, the small army set off to the creek, tower, and church.

"Now, Mr. Frank," said the lieutenant, as they came near to the creek, "just you show us how you managed to get down into this drain. You know the way, you say; I don't."

"But if we go down into the creek we cannot see the admiral's signal," said Frank.

"That is true; look here, Jack Frost, just you perch yourself on the tree yonder, and when you see the admiral's signal just blow a shrill whistle in your pipe and then tumble down as fast as you can, and come on and join us as quickly as you can, for to-night we shall want all our men—for if I know anything of these fellows it will be hot work, very hot work, indeed."

"Aye! aye! sir," said the man; "you need not fear that I will lag behind."

"I don't, only keep a sharp look out and all will be well. Now, Mr. Frank, load on."

The moon had now quite disappeared, and the night was so dark that Frank found it rather difficult to lead the way down to the culvert.

However, he managed to discover it, and soon the whole party were safe in the drain.

Silence had been strictly ordered and the party remained as still as mice.

"Phew! what a time old Portfire is bringing up his men," whispered the lieutenant.

"It seems a long time," replied Frank, in the same tone, "but it may not be so."

"Ah! a watched kettle takes the longest boiling," replied Grognum, "that's about it."

There was something very terrible and unearthly waiting there in the cold dark night.

The men, in spite of the injunction not to talk, began to whisper the legend of Cuthroat Creek.

The very waters as they flowed over mud seemed telling strange weird stories.

Suddenly the shrill pipe of the boatswain's whistle rang in the night air.

"Now men," shouted the lieutenant; "light your torches, for we shall need them in this hole."

The torches were soon blazing away, and then the lieutenant gave the word to advance.

They had not gone far when they heard the sound of men approaching to meet them.

"Now, my lads," cried Grognum, "stand firm. Don't kill more than you can help, but whoever resists just tap him on the head with your cutlass, and if that don't suit him put a bullet into him."

With this kind advice to his men the lieutenant led them forward.

"Halt!" shouted a voice out of the darkness; "halt, or I fire."



FRANK BEHELD A MAN LEANING DOWN BY THE WINDOWS GAZING THROUGH THE SHUTTEES.

"Hold up your torches, men," cried the lieutenant, snatching one and holding it aloft.

He had scarcely raised it above his head when it was knocked out of his hand by a bullet.

But he had had time to see that the leader of the opposite party was the Dandy Boatman.

"Forward!" cried Grogrum, with a shriek of rage; "forward! slay and spare not."

With a ringing cheer the men sprang forward to the fight.

But the men they met were not only brave but also desperate.

They knew that they were fighting for life and liberty.

If they were taken, penal servitude for life would be the least punishment they would have.

As for Reuben Ashcroft he knew his fate would be death, and therefore preferred to meet it fighting rather than by the hands of the executioner.

"Hnrrah! my brave boys," he cried; "forward to cut the wretches down."

"Fight for your laws and country," shouted the lieutenant; "hack the murderous rogues to pieces."

In less time than it takes to write it, the scene became one of bloodshed and horror.

The air was filled with the sharp clash of steel, the report of pistols, and the oaths and curses of men.

Now and then the quick report of a pistol could be heard, followed by the yell of the man who was shot.

Reuben Ashcroft performed prodigies of valour. He was ever in the thickest of the fight—now cheering on his men—now dealing death around.

Twice had Frank met him and crossed swords with him, but they had been separated.

Frank thought that Reuben avoided him, and he was right in so thinking.

The Dandy Boatman was superstitious and believed that Frank would bring him ill luck.

Lieutenant Grogrum tried all he could to reach Reuben Ashcroft but did not succeed.

Desperately as the smugglers fought, the lieutenant's men got the best of it.

"Fall back, men! fall back!" cried Reuben, "to the vaults! to the vaults!"

Bravely the smugglers kept their foes at a distance while they retreated.

At last they reached the trap door, upon which Frank had seen the coffins taken.

"Up with you," cried Reuben Ashcroft, "while I keep these men at bay."

Quickly some half dozen men were up the trap, but no sooner had they reached the vaults than the police sprang upon them.

"Curses on it," cried Ashcroft, "we are surrounded. Up, men, and fight it out in the vaults."

The men clambered up and the contest now raged in the vaults of the church.

"Five pounds to any man who will take Ashcroft prisoner," cried Grogrum.

As he spoke he dashed forward to seize the Dandy Boatman, but with a wild laugh of defiance Reuben Ashcroft sprang through the trap into the vault and then slammed it down on his pursuers.

"Curse him, he will escape," cried Grogrum, mad with rage; "burst open the trap."

This was much easier said than done, as the men found out.

They battered away as hard as they could, but to no purpose.

At last the sounds of the struggle in the vaults became fainter.

Then the trap door was thrown up and the police inspector called out:

"For heaven's sake come up, lieutenant, or they will escape."

"That is what we have been trying to do all along," cried Grogrum, "but the trap is fastened."

"Ashcroft shot the bolt when he closed it. But make haste. They fight like demons."

The lieutenant and his men were soon through the trap.

No sooner did they reach the vaults than with a wringing cheer they dashed forward.

"Ho, ho," roared Ashcroft, as he saw them, "here come the water rats. To the passage, lads."

The smugglers obeyed the command, and rushed to the secret passage leading to the tower.

The preventive men rushed to follow them, but in the doorway stood Reuben Ashcroft.

In one hand he grasped an axe, and in the other was a flaming torch.

Swinging the axe on high he made some desperate blows at the coffins.

Then every one could plainly see what the coffins contained, and why the smugglers had pulled them up from, and lowered them into the boats.

The coffins split and out rolled a number of small kegs of brandy.

Some of them burst upon the floor, and with a demoniacal laugh Ashcroft flung the flaming torch into the spirit which at once took fire, and in a minute all was in a blaze.

"Forward, men, forward to the passage, or you are lost," cried the lieutenant.

Nothing daunted, the men sprang forward and were soon in the secret passage leaving the doomed church in flames.

And now the conflict became more terrible and murderous than ever.

The smugglers on reaching the tower found the admiral there ready to receive them.

"Surrender!" cried the brave old admiral, "it is useless to strive longer. Lay down your arms."

"Never!" roared Reuben Ashcroft, "strike, my brave boys, strike. Those who yield will but be hanged, so die fighting bravely. Cut our way through them. If we reach the shore we may get on board the *Firefly*, and then we are free! free! free! strike them down, lads."

Encouraged by these words the smugglers dashed forward to the assault.

After a desperate fight they managed to cut through the opposing men.

Many fell dead in the attempt, but a few, headed by Reuben Ashcroft, escaped from the tower.

(To be continued. Commenced in No. 853.)



SHAN FORCES LARRY TO SWEAR HE WILL NEVER REVEAL THE MURDER OF MR. SULLIVAN'S CHILD.

LARRY O'KEEFE,

BY BRACEBRIDGE HEMYNG.

AUTHOR OF THE HARKAWAY STORIES

CHAPTER XII.

MR. GILLHOOLEY OF SMASHEMALL HALL.

"SURE Misther Wildney tonld me to come here wid it, as he'd bough't it, an' if I pelted the goverwid praties, it 'ud pnt him in a good hnmour, an' he'd take me hack again."

As Larry pronounced the name of Wildney, a light broke upon Mr. Snllivan.

He saw how it was.

"Oh!" he exclaimed, good-hnmoredly enough now, "if Wildney had a hand in it I can under-stand it; though if that yonng gentleman doesn't stop playing his jokes upon me, I'll—I'll——"

He hesitated, for, as a matter of fact, he did not know what he could do.

Mr. McManus had just succeeded in swallowing the last bit of potato-skin which stuck in his throat.

"Ahem!" he remarked, coughing. "It's simply disgraceful."

"The boy's a fool!" said Mr. Snllivan.

"No, I ain't, either," replied Larry. "Why wouldn't I do what the gentleman told me, and he so respectable?"

"Thrn him out, Kerrigan," shonted Mr. Snllivan; "and if he dares to enter the hank again, kick him ont."

"Yes sir."

"Sure all I did was to thry to amuse yer," replied Larry.

"Amnse! I be hanged to your impudence! is there any fun in b-ing half-smothered with baked potatoes?"

"Didn't he tell me to do it?"

"Turn him ont!" cried the hanker.

"Didn't I catch yer horse, an' didn't I warn yer

about Shan Van Voght? Oh bedad, it's little I'll be spakin' agin to the likes of you," said Larry.

He was not allowed to say any more, for Kerrigan dragged him out, and having gained the top of the three steps which led up to the hank, he gave him a kick which sent Larry sprawling on his hands and knees in the gutter.

"That's to tache you hetther manners," he exclaimed.

"Bad sess to ye, Barney Kerrigan," answered Larry. "Here's somethin' to tache yon to kepe yer hands off me in future."

He flung a handful of mud at the messenger, which he splattered his face and white shirt-front, closing both his eyes and stopping his laughter.

After which exploit Larry ran away hack to Mr. O'Grady's hotel.

Meanwhile Pat had demanded payment for the wasted potatoes, which Mr. Snllivan gave him.

Kerrigan swept ont the office, Pat took his tin can, away, and business was resumed.

A short time afterwards Mike the Mischief returned to his brother's hank, and laughed heartily when he heard of Larry's last exploit.

"Larry, will be the death of me some day, with his blunders," said Mike; "and he'll get into trouble if he does all Wildney tells him."

"I have discharged Wildney as well as Larry," replied Mr. Snllivan.

"It's a pity that Wildney won't be steady," said McManus.

"It is indeed," answered the hanker. "I have taken a great interest in him, for his father's sake, and his own, too."

"Oh!" remarked Mike the Mischief, "he's well off and doesn't need to work."

"But all young men ought to do something."

"Granted, and Wildney likes to have his fun."

"Yon and he, Mike, are of the same mind, I think," said the hanker, smiling.

"Egad, yon're right!" answered Mike. "I have jnst left Delaney at O'Grady's Hotel, and we have been doing our best to make Gillhooley, of Smashemall Hall, as drunk as a lord."

"What, Mike make a member of Parliament tipsey?"

"Yes, and we succeeded. In an hour's time he won't know a big A from a bull's foot."

Mr. Snllivan could not help laughing.

"He is to be my opponent at the coming election," he said. "But I can't quite approve of that sort of thing."

"All's fair in love, war, and electioneering."

"What was your object?"

"To get some of his tactics out of him, and egad! Delaney is the man to do it," replied Mike.

"I wonder he talked to you."

"Well, yon see, he's not quite snre yon're a candidate. Your address to the electors is not yet ont, and he knows that Delaney is a power of strength; he wants to get him on his side if possible."

"Sorry for him."

"Glad you mean. Delaney wouldn't leave our camp, and I've a bit of news to give you."

"What's that?"

"Gillhooley is short of money. He finds that he wants funds to fight the campaign; and the best of the joke is, he has asked Delaney to get him a loan."

"Ha! ha!" laughed the hanker.

"Delaney has been promising him everything he asked, and Gillhooley is buying the wine, which snits Delaney to a T."

The messenger came in to announce that the hanker's carriage was ready.

He got in with his brother Mike, and they drove home together.

Meanwhile, Larry had found his way hack to the hotel, where he did not see anything of Wildney.

The coachman, Mnrfy, however, met him at the gate of the yard.

"Where have yon heen, you spalpeen?" he asked.

"You wasn't here to tell me what to do, and so I went out on my own business," answered Larry.

"Do you want me to knock the head off of you?"

"No, Misther Murphy; me head's what God gave me, and I want to kapo it, if you plaze."

"You lazy vagabond!" exclaimed the coachman.

"Can you drive?"

"Drive, is it?" replied Larry with a smile.

"I said drive, didn't I, you emadhaun?"

"Indade I can, sir."

"That's good, I'm glad you can do something."

If the truth must be told, Larry had as much knowledge of driving as a cow has of flying, but he did not think it polite to say he could not do what he was asked.

"Whon'll I have to drive, Misther Murhy?"

"You'll know when you're tould, won't ye?"

"I'd like to know now."

"I'll not tell you. Come, help me harness the horses."

Larry was in rather an uncomfortable state of mind, for he was a small boy to drive two horses, and when it is remembered that he never had a pair of lines in his hands before, it can be readily surmised that he was somewhat nervous.

"Sure every one has to learn," he said in an undertone. "There never was anything yet without a beginning. You pull the reins this way, an' you pull them that, so the horses have to go as you've a mind they should."

When the horses were harnessed Larry mounted the box, and being tall for his age, did not look so insignificant behind a pair as might have been expected.

He managed to get the coach to the door of the hotel, where he pulled up and waited while Murphy held the door open.

Presently, Mr. Gillhooley, member for Cashelberry, came downstairs, leaning on the arm of Delaney.

"Now you'd give me all the support you can!" said Gillhooley.

"Sure, I'm doing that game now," replied the jockey attorney, who with difficulty saved him from falling, as he made a desperate lurch, three steps from the landing.

"Hang your jokes! Be serious."

"Wait till the day of election comes, and you'll see who your friends are."

"I count on you."

"You shall have a fair count. Get in."

Gillhooley stumbled in the hallway, and blundered heavily against O'Grady, the landlord, who was bowing him out.

"Take care, sir!" exclaimed O'Grady.

"Take care, yourself, sir," replied Gillhooley, looking at him with drunken gavity. "Confound your impudence. Do you think I can't walk straight after drinking your infernal wine?"

"I don't think it all."

"What d'ye mean?" demanded Gillhooley, angrily.

"I'm sure of it. Let him go, Misther Delaney, and try. Infernal wine, indeed! There isn't better in all Ireland."

"Be still, O'Grady," replied Delaney.

"You're beneath me, sir!" exclaimed Gillhooley.

At this moment his foot slipped and he fell full length on the floor.

O'Grady laughed.

"You're beneath me now, I'm thinking," he said.

To the credit of Mr. Gillhooley, we must admit that he very seldom got so intoxicated as he was that night, and he would not have gone to such lengths had not he succumbed to the wiles of Delaney, who, for his own purposes and in the interest of Mr. Sullivan, kept on plying him with wine.

He was now to overcome that, after a few ineffectual attempts to get up, he lay perfectly still.

"D ad drunk," remarked O'Grady.

"Not far off," replied Delaney.

"Get him home. The coach is waiting."

"Take his heels and I'll take his head—that's the heaviest part of him"—exclaimed the lawyer, "and we'll lay him at the bottom of the carriage. He'll ride easily enough."

O'Grady did as he was requested, and Mr. Gillhooley, M.P., was put in the coach.

Larry touched his cap and said:

"Where'll I drive, sir?"

"To the squire's," replied O'Grady.

With a smack of the whip, Larry started the team, and the old hack horses went off at a lumbering gait down the High Street.

They were old and always took their time, walking up and down hill with a sort of religious observance of time-honoured custom.

Larry did not find it at all difficult to drive them, for they went as slowly and calmly as two old cows.

When told to drive to the squire's, Larry did not stop to consider that there were more squires than one living in the neighbourhood of Cashelberry.

He at once concluded that he had to go to Squire Sullivan's, and that the "gentleman inside" was a guest of the banker.

So he started on the road for Mr. Sullivan's, and in about an hour reached its hospitable gates.

Dinner was just over, and Mr. Sullivan was drinking wine with his brother Mike.

"What the deuce are the dogs barking at?" exclaimed the banker.

"There's a sound of wheels," replied Mike.

"I don't expect anybody."

"Let me go out and see."

Mike the Mischief sallied into the hall and out of the front door.

It was dark, but he saw the coach.

"Who have you got there?" he asked.

"Gentleman from O'Grady's, Misther Mike," replied Larry.

"Is that you, Larry?"

"Yes, Misther Mike."

"What is the gentleman's name?" inquired Mike Sullivan.

"Sorra one of me knows, Misther Mike, but he's stone drunk, an' it'll break yer heart if you have anything to do with him at all."

"Bring a lantern here," said Mike to a servant. A lantern was brought in a few minutes, and by its light he looked into the interior of the carriage.

"By the hooky!" he exclaimed. "Here's a go! Help me carry the gentleman inside."

This was said to the man with the lantern.

"Is there anything wrong, Misther Mike?" asked Larry.

"Oh, no."

"Shall I go home now, sir?"

"Take your horses round in the yard, stable them, and have your supper in the kitchen. You won't have to go back for an hour or two."

"An' that's good news, for I'm as empty as a drom," muttered Larry.

Mike the Mischief and the servant extricated Gillhooley from the carriage and carried him into the dining-room, where they laid him on a sofa.

"Who's this, Mike?" asked the banker.

"Use your eyes and you'll see."

Gillhooley, by all that's extraordinary! What's the matter with him?"

"Didn't I tell you Delaney had him in training?"

Mr. Sullivan laughed.

"But how did he get here?"

"Larry drove him."

"Then we'll forgive Larry, for this time he has brought our opponent into the enemy's camp."

"Let's paint him red, white and blue, and send him back as he is," suggested Mike.

"No. That would be a fighting matter, and I don't care about duels. What'll we do with him?"

"Wake him up and have some fun with him," replied Mike.

"I don't like to. It doesn't seem right."

"Stiff and nonsense!"

Mike had no scruples of conscience on this score, and, going up to Gillhooley, shook him violently.

"What is it, Delaney?" he murmured.

"There," said Mike the Mischief; "he takes me for Tim, and I'll bet a new hat he'll think he's at the hotel still."

He shook him again.

Mr. Gillhooley sat up and looked about him in a confused manner.

"O'Grady," he exclaimed, "bring me some more wine!"

This was addressed to Mr. Sullivan, who red-dened.

"Confound his impudence!" said the banker.

"Hush!" whispered Mike, with his finger on his lips. "Let's carry the joke out."

"As you please."

"You'll agree? Is it a bargain?" cried Mike the Mischief.

"Yes," replied the banker, reluctantly.

Mr. Gillhooley was rubbing his eyes, but he was so far from being sober that he believed he was at the inn, and that Mike was Delaney, while his brother was O'Grady, the landlord.

"Kick that fellow for me, Tim," he exclaimed.

"Which one?" asked Mike.

"O'Grady, the thief! Why doesn't he bring the wine?"

Mike the Mischief administered a kick to his brother, saying, "Make haste, can't you?"

Mr. Sullivan made a wry face.

"This is carrying the joke too far," he said, in a tone of remonstrance.

"Remember your bargain."

Reluctantly the banker brought a bottle of wine from the side-board and opened it, placing it on the table.

"Hand it here, you rascal," roared Gillhooley. "It is not so many years since you were a waiter, and now you want to put on airs."

The banker handed round the wine.

"That's something like," said Gillhooley; "you may take a glass yourself. We'll win the election yet. Not a word, D. Laney, if I tell you a secret."

"Not a syllable," replied Mike.

"I'm to have a couple of thousand pounds from the castle to fight the battle for the government."

"But that's bribery," said Mike.

"Who cares? We'll spend it as nobody will know. We'll buy up all the mud in the country around, and engage all the hotels and public houses. Sullivan will have a hard road to travel if he fights against me."

"Will he?" said Sullivan, between his teeth.

"We'll settle him, Delaney," continued Gillhooley. That fellow Sullivan's just had his bank robbed—that! ha! I wish they'd stolen all he's got."

The banker could restrain himself no longer. He forgot the command he had made with his brother, and, advancing to Gillhooley, exclaimed:

"Get out of my house, you drunken beast!"

"Waa—what say?" asked Gillhooley.

"I'm Mr. Sullivan. You have made a mistake in coming here, and if you don't get out, I'll kick you out!"

Gillhooley staggered to his feet.

With a groan, Mike the Mischief sank into a chair.

"It's spoiled it all. I thought he would," he muttered.

Looking around him, Gillhooley stared at Sullivan.

"This isn't an inn, and you're not O'Grady. How did I come here?"

"The driver brought you here by mistake."

By an effort Gillhooley sobered himself.

"Sir!" he exclaimed, "you're no gentleman."

"Why not, I should like to know?" demanded Mr. Sullivan.

"You ought to have told me at first that I'd made a mistake, instead of carrying this farce out to my disadvantage."

The banker winced at this answer, which he felt to be true enough.

He bitterly blamed his brother Michael in his own mind for inducing him to enter upon the joke at all.

"You were in such a state when you entered this house," he said "that you couldn't listen to reason."

"Then I ought not to have been allowed to enter it. You have taken a base advantage of me."

"I am in my own house, sir," replied Sullivan, "and you have no right to insult me."

"I hope I do insult you," replied Gillhooley, who was rapidly becoming himself again. "Be good enough to order my carriage."

The banker rang the bell.

There was a disagreeable silence until the servant came.

"This gentleman's carriage at once," said Sullivan.

"How can I tell what I have said, when I fancied that you were O'Grady, and your brother there, Mr. Delaney?" continued Gillhooley.

"If you had not a guilty conscience you would not be afraid of what you said," answered Mike.

"But electioneering tactics my dear sir—"

"Rubbish! Is money from Dublin for purposes of bribery to be called tactics?"

"It's not true, sir."

You said so, and we'll unsent you on petition, if you do get elected."

Gillhooley walked to and fro, deeply excited.

"I say it's a shame, and no decent man would have done it," he exclaimed.

Mike the Mischief flushed to the temples.

"Do you mean to say I'm not a decent man?"

he asked, in a tone of concentrated fury.

"I mean what I said."

"Then by—, sir," cried Mike, "I'll be happy

to give you all the satisfaction you want by day-break to-morrow morning."

"I understand you, sir," replied Gillhooley, who was not deficient in courage.

The banker pushed his brother on one side.

"What's to do now?" asked Mike.

"This is my quarrel," said Mr. Sullivan.

"No, it isn't; I've taken it up."

"And I claim first shot, Mr. Gillhooley. If you want to fight with any one, I am at your service."

"Oh, I'll fight the pair of you," replied Gillhooley. "I'm not afraid of burning powder."

There was a dead silence, which neither broke after this, and at length it became oppressive.

When the servant announced that the carriage was at the door, every one felt a sense of relief.

Without any word of good-bye, Gillhooley stalked away, but when on the threshold he paused, and lifting his hand, exclaimed,—

"Rest assured you shall hear from me!"

He was lighted down the steps by the servant, who assisted him into the carriage.

Shutting the door, the man exclaimed, "Right," and Larry drove off at a sharp trot.

Larry had been well entertained at supper in the kitchen, and having drank several glasses of ale, he plied the whip with more energy than he otherwise would have done.

But his eyes were not very wide open, and the horses were first on one side of the road and then on the other.

It seemed as if he was trying how to go zigzag, just for an experiment in driving.

After going half the distance between Mr. Sullivan's house and Cashelbory, the road became very narrow.

Larry, somehow or another, miscalculated the distance between the edge of the road and the ditch.

The consequence was that the coach turned gracefully over on its side, and Larry was pitched over the hedge into an adjoining meadow.

Fortunately, the ground was soft, and he did not receive any injury.

Mr. Gillhooley was not so lucky, for he cut his hand with the glass of the broken window and bumped his head severely.

The horses were kicking and plunging.

With difficulty, Mr. Gillhooley opened one of the doors and crawled out into the muddy road.

A black night prevented him from seeing far beyond his face.

"Driver!" he exclaimed, "where are you?"

"T'other side of the hedge, sir," replied Larry.

"How did you get there?"

"Sure, an' it's meself doesn't know yer, honour. The wheel came off or something av that sort, an' I was sint flyin'."

"Come over here into the lane, and I'll break every bone in your rascally skin!" shouted Gillhooley.

"Thank ye all the same, yer honour, but I'm very comfortable where I am," returned Larry.

"It's my opinion you're drunk."

"That's a good man's case, sirr."

"How?"

"Sure you were that way when you left O'Grady's."

"By this and that, I'll grind you into powder if I can light on you."

"The hedge is purty thick, yer honour, an' divil a gap in it for miles."

"Are you making fun of me?"

"It's meself that likes a joke, sirr, an' by the powers, I think the laugh's on my side av the hedge."

"Come over here, I say, and let us see if we can't get this confounded carriage up again."

"You'll break every bone in my skin."

"No, sir, I was angry at the time I said that," replied Gillhooley.

"But you said it, sure, and ivry gintleman kapes his word," replied Larry.

"I'll let you off this time. Creep through the hedge."

"Crape through, is it? I'd lave the tail of my shirt behind."

"Will you come?"

"No, sirr," replied Larry. "I decline the honor, as the man said when the sheriff arrested him and asked him to be so kind as to come to jail wid him."

"You villain."

"I don't know yer honor's name, but is it talkin' to yerself ye are?"

"I'll knock the life out of you when I catch you."

"That won't be this side of Christmas, I'm thinking," replied Larry.

"Are you going to leave me in the lurch like this?"

"The best av friends must part some time."

"I'll complain to your master and get you discharged," cried the irate Gillhooley.

"I'll discharge meself this minute, and save yer honor the trouble. It's little I care about drivin' horses, the bastes—they niver go the way they're wanted to," said Larry.

"Will you come here and help me get these horses up and the coach out of the ditch?"

"Faith I'll be gettin' home."

"What am I to do?"

"Slape in the coach. Cut the traces and let the horses go. Bada, there's many a man in Ireland this night who won't have so good a shelter," replied Larry.

Smothering his indignation, Mr. Gillhooley was obliged to take the boy's advice.

There was no help for it.

With a pocket-knife he cut the traces and allowed the horses to get up and go their own way, while he crawled into the carriage and made himself as comfortable as he could.

It was long past daybreak when he awoke from an uneasy slumber.

Soon after he had stretched his weary and aching limbs, a man came by in a cart, and for a consideration drove him to his home at Smasheemall Hall.

Deep and dire was the vengeance which Gillhooley vowed against everybody.

He had demanded satisfaction from the Sallivans for the slight he thought they had put upon him.

But on calm consideration he came to the conclusion that to fight a duel would be folly.

It was against the law of the land, and if either the Sullivan brothers fell by his hand on the field of honour, he would be held liable for murder by the law.

So he had to put up with the treatment he had received, and concentrate all his energies towards heating them in the forthcoming election.

As for Larry, he had started off across the fields, in the direction of O'Keefe's cottage.

He thought that the only thing he could do now was to go home.

O'Grady was not likely to take him back after he had upset his coach, and Mr. Sullivan had set his face against him on account of the mistakes he had made while he was in the service of the bank.

CHAPTER XIII.

SHAN SHOWS HIS TEETH.

WHEN Mr. Gillhooley had taken his departure, Mike the Mischief burst into a loud laugh.

"I can't see anything to laugh at myself," exclaimed Mr. Sullivan; "we have not treated the man fair y."

"Why did he come here?"

"That was Larry's fault, and Gillhooley had been drinking too much."

"That's his look out," answered Mike. "I tell you we have played a point on him, and as for fighting—pshaw! I wouldn't give a snap of the fingers for all the fight there is in him. It's against the law, and he won't risk it."

"I imagine not; but anyhow, I wish the affair had not happened," said Mr. Sullivan.

Suddenly the door was thrown open, and Mrs. Sullivan, a lovely young lady, rushed into the room.

"Oh!" she cried, in accents of deep terror, "what shall we do? My heart is broken!"

"What has happened?" inquired the hanker, supporting her with his arm.

"Our child—our darling!" she sobbed.

"What of him? Speak, I implore you?" said the agonized father.

He guessed the truth.

The revelation which Larry had made to him prepared him for the worst.

"While the nurse was at supper," continued Mrs. Sullivan, speaking as well as she could for the

sobs which checked her utterance, "the child, who was asleep in the nursery, was stolen!"

"Stolen!"

The banker became pale as death.

"Nurse heard a cry, and saw two men making off through the side-door which leads into the garden."

Turning to his brother, Mr. Sullivan exclaimed, rapidly,—

"You hear that, Mike. After them, after them, while I rouse the house!"

Mike was on his feet in an instant, and rushing into the hall, seized a loaded rifle which was suspended on a rack.

"Never fear," he muttered, "I'm ready."

He opened the door, and, rifle in hand, plunged into the darkness.

The hanker placed Mrs. Sullivan on a sofa, where she went into violent hysterics.

Then he rang the bell repeatedly, so that all the servants came rushing up.

"Our child is stolen!" he cried. "See to your mistress; some of you let loose the dogs; bring guns and lanterns; we must give chase instantly."

He ran to and fro like one distracted.

Soon the deep baying of hounds was heard, and this was followed by the shouts of men and the flashing of lanterns here and there amid the trees and shrubs.

Presently there was the sound of a shot.

"Lights, there, lights!" cried the stentorian voice of Mike the Mischief.

All ran to the spot.

Half a dozen lanterns cast their lurid glare upon the body of a man which was lying on the grass.

Mr. Sullivan was one of the first on the spot.

"I saw him dodging behind a bush," said Mike, "and I let fly at him. It is not often I miss my mark."

"You've hit him hard, anyhow," replied his brother.

"Who is it, Tony?" asked Mike, addressing one of the stable-helpers.

"That's O'Halloran, your honour, the lame tinker, who goes about mending pots and pans," was the reply.

"So it is. I mind him now."

"But the child, Mike. The child."

"The other man must have him. I'll bet he's with this fellow's companion."

"And unless our information is incorrect, that companion is Shan Van Voght. You see to this man, Mike, and I'll strike off for Shan's cottage. Who'll follow me?"

"I."

"And I!" shouted half a dozen servants.

In a brief space the men were armed, and carrying lanterns, which the darkness of the night rendered necessary, they started with Mr. Sullivan at their head.

Mike was left with two men to see to the wounded man.

O'Halloran, for it was he, was breathing with difficulty.

The ball had struck him in the chest, and apparently lodged in his lungs.

"Are you much hurt?" asked Mike.

"I'm done for, this journey, squire," replied the tinker. "Curse on this leg of mine, which stopped my running. You'd never have caught on me if I hadn't been lame."

"Who was with you?"

"I shan't tell you," replied O'Halloran.

"What did you come for?"

"Find out and you'll know," said the tinker, defiantly.

"You'll go to prison for life if you don't speak," urged Mike.

"No prison but the grave will ever receive me. Sind for the prasto. I'll speak to him."

Turning to one of the men, Mike exclaimed,—

"Saddle a horse and ride as fast as you can for Father Barry. Hurry."

The man departed.

"And you," continued Mike to the other, "take his head and shoulders. We'll carry him in and keep him alive, if possible, till his reverence arrives."

O'Halloran groaned deeply as they lifted him up, and appeared to be in great pain.

They carried him into the servants' hail, so as not to shock Mrs. Sullivan's nerves, should she have seen him in the upper part of the house.

(To be continued. Commenced in No. 359.)

PASTIMES FOR THE INGENIOUS.

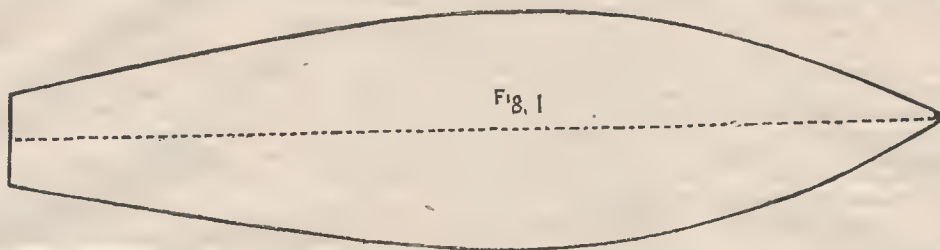
HOW TO BUILD A YACHT.

IN giving our young readers, this week, some practical instructions for the building of a model yacht, we shall depart from the ordinary

will be seen by reference to Figs. 3 & 8. The other portions where the same wood can be used with advantage will be the "keel," the "floor-timbers," "stern-post," and "stem post." A section of the keel may be seen in Figs. 5 & 6; that with the cross piece showing the shape of the "floor-timbers," with the manner of fixing them into the keel, the length

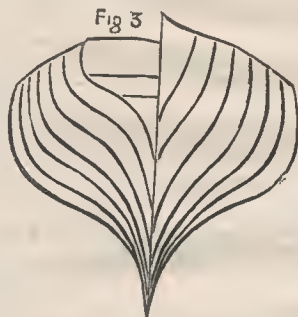
Your model will now present the appearance of the framework or skeleton of a ship, and it now remains only to clothe its timbers with their proper covering.

To effect this a sufficient number of planks must be prepared of willow wood, of about the proper-



method on which all models of ships made by boys are usually constructed. This plan consists, as is well known, in literally carving out of a solid block of wood the required model, the hull of which is first fashioned into shape, and then the inside is scooped out bit by bit until the bulwarks assume somewhat of their relative thickness. This task is in itself a very uncertain and tedious process, and withal somewhat dangerous into the bargain, and many an ugly cut to hands and digits has, we fear, in many cases been the only real result, whilst the poor model has been rent with many a gash, fatal, alas! to its floating qualities.

The plan we intend to go upon in these pages is



that which is really acted upon in the shipyards where real vessels are built. Thus our young friends will gain, in the construction of their model ship, real knowledge of the principles of actual ship-building, and, at the same time, if they have an ordinary amount of skill and patience, they will be rewarded by the production of a model which shall exceed in beauty and truth the actual thing, and for floating qualities be far superior to the old carved model from a block of wood.

The best kind of wood to use in cutting out many of the portions of woodwork required to build this model will be *lime*, as that wood is capable of being cut into almost any variety of form without

of which may be seen in Fig. 8, C. The wood of the *willow* will be found suitable for planking or sheathing of the *hull*, the form of which is shown in Fig. 7.

These will require bending at each end. This can be effected by making a number of cuts on the



inside of each plank at both ends, as shown in the diagram.

Having described most of the parts required, we shall now proceed to give some instructions in the actual building of the model.

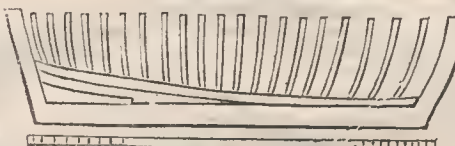
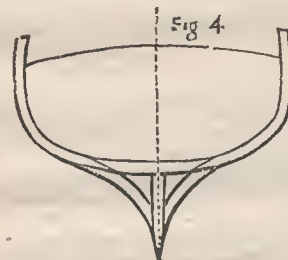
The first thing to be done is to lay down the keel, and fix thereto at each end the stern-post and the stem-post. The manner of fixing is shown in the diagram of those parts. Fig. 8, A & B.

Having done this, the next thing will be to pro-

tion of the one shown in Fig. 8, but of different lengths. This is seen above the keel.

Take one of these, beginning from the bottom and place it immediately above the keel, bending it so as to go over all the ribs, and fasten it at each end, one to the *stem-post*, and the other to the *stern-post*, and passing a peg through each rib to hold it quite secure; and so proceed with each plank until you have completely covered the *hull*. Fix them as close together as possible, but you can afterwards *caulk* with oakum between each plank, and a little pitch over this will render it water-tight.

You have now only to fix the deck. This you can cut out perfect from a piece of thin willow

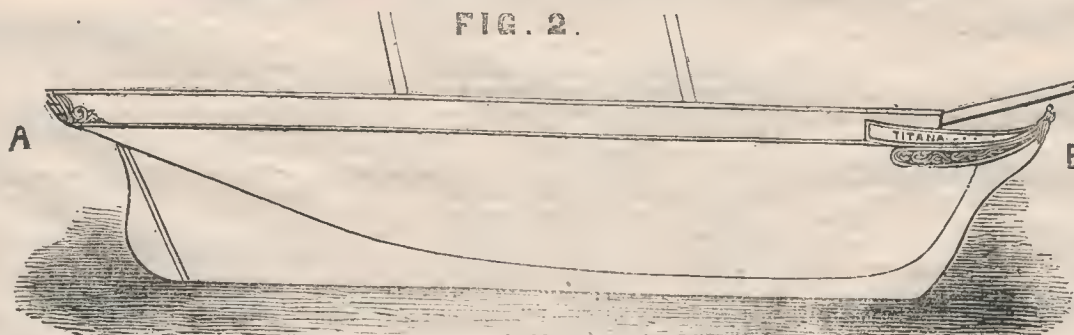


vide the required number of ribs, and to fix them into the keel, as shown in Fig. 6. When these are all fixed on one side in their proper places, so as to resemble Fig. 8, then proceed to repeat the same on the other side. Little pegs made of boxwood should be used, in all cases, for fastening.

marking the lines of the planks by slight lines cut into the wood. This will look *real*, and will have a much neater effect than you could hope to produce by attempting to follow the actual method of real ship-building. Before fixing the deck you should cut out the hatchway, and make the hatchway-frames, as likewise a little *cabin*, and your yacht will be complete.

If you wish to adorn it with a figure-head you can carve one out of a little piece of boxwood, and fix it in its proper place at the top of the stem-post. For form of the deck see Fig. 1.

The stern also can be carved out of the same wood, as likewise the bows, Fig. 2, A. & B.



danger of splitting; the particular parts to be cut out of which will be, in the first place, those called the "frames" or "ribs," (Fig. 4), the exact form of which is there shown. A considerable number of these will be required—namely, twenty for each side, large and small, the proper sizes for which

Now begin to cut out a number of "beams" for the support of the deck. These should go across from one rib to the other, at every alternate pair, and should be *well rounded up* in form to give the deck resting upon them its proper slightly convex appearance, as may be seen in Fig. 4.

SOUND IN THE ARCTIC REGIONS.—In the Arctic regions, where the thermometer is below zero, persons can converse more than a mile distant. Mr. Jamieson asserted that he heard every word of a sermon at the distance of two miles on a still day with perfect distinctness.

UP A TREE;

OR,

TINY TOM TIT AND THE APPLES.

THE incident I am about to relate occurred to a little fellow of our village known as Tiny Tom—or Tom Tit, as he was mostly styled. A few introductory observations may serve to make the story more interesting.

Remarkably small for his age, and a mere imp, as his name would imply, he was a veritable imp of darkness.

If ever there was a mischief loving young scamp on the broad face of the earth, or anywhere else, Tom Tit would give him a lot of chalks and beat him hollow.

The authors of Tom Tit's existence are mysterious.

It was argued by many that he was the son of a notorious poacher who had come to considerable grief some fifteen years since; but that idea was easily refuted, for the gentleman spoken of had left his country for his country's good at that time and had not since returned, and Tiny Tom was certainly not more than half a score of years to the good—or bad, whichever you like.

Under any circumstances, he was remarkably small for his age, and was possessed of hair as red as a holly-berry.

Nobody appeared to be accountable for Tom Tit's existence, and yet there he was.

How did he get there?

Here, then, are the stubborn facts.

Police Constable Stopper was on duty one fine night, and not exactly knowing how to fill up his time before turning in—he was supposed to be on duty from ten o'clock night until five in the morning, and therefore, usually started about four o'clock and wandered about until time was up—he took a stroll past the parson's cottage, with the intention of having a quiet pipe on the seat under the portico.

He beheld a something wrapped in flannels and brown paper lying at the parson's doorstep.

Bringing his bull's-eye fairly to bear upon it, he saw it was a parcel, and proceeded to pick it up.

As he did so it squeaked, which made him put it down again.

He then examined it curiously, and saw written upon the cover in large characters:—

"TAKE CARE OF THIS FOR ITS MOTHER'S SAKE—A POOR PENITENT SINNER. ITS NAME IS THOMAS TIT."

"Well," said he, "here's a pretty go."

Taking a little time for consideration, he continued,—

"Who'd a thought it? But there, I never didn't 'ave much belief in parsons, not at the best o' times."

Knocking at the door, and ringing the bell, the window presently opened above his head, and a voice much muffled by wrappers and blankets enquired,—

"Who's there?"

"It's me, sir—P.C. Stopper."

"What?"

"P.C. Stopper, sir."

"See what stopper?"

"I didn't say see no stopper. I said P.C. Stopper—Police Constable Stopper, sir."

"Stop who?"

The poor parson was half asleep and his mufflers affected his hearing equally with his speech.

"The policeman, sir."

"Oh, it's you, Stopper, is it?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, what d'you want?"

"As I was walking round this way, sir, on dooty, just took a look round the 'ouse to see as all was

safe, and I catched sight of this 'ere a-lyin' at your door."

"What is it?"

"A sumthink, sir."

"A what?"

"A sumthink, sir."

"I don't know what you mean. What is it?"

"Blest if I know. It's in the form of a parcel, and a reg'lar squeaker into the bargain. There's sumthink rote on to it."

The Reverend Mr. Welfare chanced catching a cold, and unmuffled his ears.

P.C. Stopper held it up to convince the parson that it was a squeaker.

"What can it be, constable? Not a pig surely?"

"Werry like as it is, sir."

"Something written on it, did you say?"

"Yes, sir."

"What is it? Can you read it?"

Could he read it, and he in the police force too! Without a word of reply to such a question, P.C. Stopper read once again:—

"Take care of this for its mother's sake—a poor penitent sinner. Its name is Thomas Tit. That's all, sir."

"That's all, indeed! Quite enough too."



IN SUSPENSE.

The parson was struck dumb with horror. Take care of it for its mother's sake? Who was its mother? Oh, dear! Oh, dear! This was certainly dreadful. It was horrible! *What would the world say?*

Quickly dressing, he appeared at the door, and the constable brought the screaming package into the passage.

"Dear me, what is to be done!" asked the parson of the policeman. "It's very awkward!"

"Well, sir, I have knowed a more delicate way of doing things, I must say, and if you was to take my advice, you'd just take it in and put it out to nurse, and say no more about it. You've no call to be afeared o' me, yer know. Mum's the word with me. I never knowe nothink of nobody's business—you understand air?"

"But, my good man, you don't surely suppose—"

"I never supposes nothink, sir—and there you bave me as plain as a book."

The parson was too much perturbed to notice particularly the drift of P.C. Stopper's crude observations.

"Dear me!" he ejaculated, "how very distressing to be sure! I wonder who can the mother of it be?"

"Well," says P.C. Stopper to himself, "I 'ave 'eard of 'ardened sinners, but this 'ere wicked old repperbate licks the lot. Don't even so much as know which is the mother of it."

The parson, in a truly Christian spirit, took up his burden and entered with it.

It turned out to be a small but healthy male child, with flaming red hair, and a voice like a penny trumpeter.

Having called the policeman "bonest fellow," and given him a glass of very mild home-brewed, he desired that he would hold his peace, that there might be no misconception.

The "honest fellow" solemnly assured the reverend gentleman that he might place the most implicit reliance upon his discretion, which the Rev. Mr. Welfare did, not wisely, but too well, omitting that important little addition called "plating the palm."

This was omitted purposely, for the worthy parson scorned the idea of bribery, and avoided the fact with determination.

Nanny Burge, the parson's bonsekeeper, had also undertaken the charge, and promised secrecy.

Master Tom Tit grew in strength and impudence, but not in stature; impudence seemingly exalted nature.

In a Christianly way the parson continued his support of the child, and many a gracious contribution was received on its behalf from the kindly disposed parishioners.

But everybody agreed that Tom Tit was a regular little limb, as old Nanny Burge styled him.

Now Tom Tit's education had been progressing very favourably under the guidance of Mistress Barlow, the village schoolmistress.

The parson took particular interest in scholastic matters, and went so far as to offer for competition a prize to the best reader in the school.

Mistress Barlow had a nephew, a very cute lad in his way, but not a patch upon Tiny Tom, and her dameship had worked at that boy at odd times to bring him well forward in the great competition; and, indeed, had so far succeeded, that Tom Tit was his only rival.

The prize rested between them.

Tha auspicious day arrived, and the eager young competitors each had the prize in his mind's eye.

That prize, hy-the-bye, was an old pair of the parson's "can't-mention-ems."

Mrs. Barlow favoured her nephew, and finding Tom Tit was heating him out and out, began to cheat.

Tom Tit saw it, and told her to "leave off a-alterin' of them marks."

This fairly riled Mrs. B., and she struck the sharp Master Tom Tit across the ear, with the cane she wielded, causing a nasty cut and a rather copious flow of crimson fluid.

At this unfortunate juncture the parson was announced as marching up the front garden.

What was to be done?

There was but little time for consideration, and seizing Tom Tit by the shoulders, she opened the back door, and ennumerably ejected him into the very place of all others he would most desire to go.

"You go out there, and wait till I call you."

Mistress Barlow's back garden was known to possess an uncommonly fine gooseberry-bush, and at this time there were gooseberries upon it of enormous size, and reeking with ripeness and engar.

Tom Tit had seen it by peeping over the wall, and had positively been planning a raid upon it this week past.

Mistress Barlow, therefore, couldn't have done a

kinder thing, and without a scruple of any kind Tom Tit cried up his tears, and squatted himself before the idol of his worship.

When the parson arrived, he naturally inquired for his Christian charge, and was informed that the boy was in disgrace.

This was nothing new. Therefore, when he had ascertained that Mistress Barlow's nephew was the winner, he congratulated him heartily, and told him to call round in the morning, and he would look him up a p—prize.

The parson took his leave, and Mistress B. went to call the delinquent.

But the delinquent was missing. He had gone over the wall, and so had the gooseherries.

Nancy Burge was fond of the boy, although she knew he was such a limb; and when she saw his cut ear, and heard the history of it, which Tom Tit was very ready to narrate—omitting the gooseberries, of course—bent upon securing justice to the boy, she took him off straightway to the parson's cottage.

Mistress Barlow was severely censured, and having attested Tiny Tom's undoubted superiority over the nephew, the parson compromised the matter by parting with a second pair—prize—of antiquities.

Tom Tit revenged himself by playing truant for many a day to come.

Nanny Burge speedily adapted the garments to the more moderate requirements of Tiny Tom, and put a big patch where the stuff was worn.

Idleness is a very dangerous playmate for any boy, more especially an active little mind like that of Tiny Tom.

One of Tom Tit's greatest failings was an inordinate love of fruit, and if he saw any have it he must, by hook or by crook.

If he couldn't get apples, he'd have turnips.

A little way down there lived Farmer Jones, a very surly individual, and no friend of the Rev. Mr. Welfare's, for whom and all other parsons he had the greatest contempt.

Tom Tit, the parson's fry, as Farmer Jones called him, was his greatest curse.

The boy was always up to something, and generally in search of fruit.

This love of fruit is strange, but nevertheless true.

Some boys are fond of marbles, and will sacrifice even a plum-cake for a bag of alley-taws—I would have done so myself—and Tom Tit would have sold the parson's bree—prize for a handful of apples.

Farmer Jones had an orchard, and many a time had Tom Tit cast longing and greedy eyes at those trees.

Last year he got a long prop and hooked the wind-falls from under the railings; this year he had grown somewhat bolder, and there he was standing at the bottom of a tree looking up wistfully with his mouth watering, as much as to say, "I cud eat the lot on ye, I cud."

When a person is open to temptation, Satan soon points out means of its gratification.

Not very far from where the lad stood there was a ladder, and Tom's eyes failed not to see it as it leant against a stack.

"I've a jolly good mind to, I 'ave," he soliloquized. There ain't nobody about, there ain't," and he still gazed fondly enraptured until the water ran out of his mouth in torrents.

"Blow'd if I don't—I will."

And he did.

It was a gallant struggle to get that ladder across, and to get it upright was a "licker," as he said.

He succeeded, however, and was not long making up his mind to run up.

Indeed, he mounted before the ladder was firmly placed, and consequently when he made his final spring on to the branch above, the ladder went down with a wheek, and, being rotten from exposure to weather, broke in two.

Tom looked down rather chagrined as he beheld his retreat thus cut off, but a big apple knocking at his nose occupied his attention, and he gave himself up to present enjoyment, without a single thought for the future.

"There ain't no fear of any one a fullerin' of me now, there ain't."

Tom proceeded at once to business, and picking some of the largest and ripest, sat like a monkey on the tree and was in paradise.

"My wig! this yere apple's a lickin', it is! Yu-um yu-um!" and he munched away.

Tom Tit's paradise was doomed to a speedy interruption, for he heard a voice below.

"Now who the dickens has broken this ladder? Daag it all, if I thought it was any o' them lads of mine, I'd flay 'em alive."

Tom Tit was horrified, and, seated in the fork of the tree, owing to his diminutive size would have escaped detection by the farmer—for it was no less a person than Farmer Jones—when he took a passing observation for intruders among the branches.

It may not be generally known, nevertheless it is a fact, that there is a peculiar dust or pollen that infests the leaves of trees, which, going up the nostrils with the breath, irritates them to such a degree, that a sneeze is unavoidable.

Tom Tit found this to be the case, and although he knew his safety depended upon his keeping as silent as the grave, burst out into a loud

"Kitchshoooo!"

This startled Farmer Jones, who, looking up, saw the little red head, and Tom knew he was caught.

"Hul-lo, my little red-headed friend, so you are there, are you?"

Farmer Jones could afford to be jocular.

"Yiss, sir," said Tom.

"So I perceive. Oh, hoh! Then I suppose it was you broke my ladder?"

"No, sir, it broked itself, it did."

"Ob, broked itself, did it?"

"Yiss, sir."

"Very well then, when you come down I'll let your head broke itself against my stick."

Now Tom had no intention of coming down until he was obliged, nor did he see very clearly how it was to be done if he did.

But Farmer Jones was very pressing and urgent in his demands for his speedy surrender.

"Please, sir, I can't get, I can't."

"Can't you get, you young red beaded villain. If you don't get, as you call it, and pretty sharp too, I'll shoot you, you young blackguard, I will."

"Please, sir, shove up the ladder, and I'll try."

"Not me; you'll have to come down without a ladder. You don't get any ladder from me, even if it wasn't broken.—Hil boy!"

Farmer Jones called to a boy from the farm passing at a little distance.

"Yes, sor-r-r."

"Tell your missus to send my gun and lead both barrels with No. 6—dy'e hear?"

"Yes, sor-r-r."

"Look sharp then!—and if that don't tickle you, and make you feel ridik'us, you thieving young red pol, I'll eat my head, and years too, red hot un as it is."

"Oh, sir—please, sir—don't do, sir—I'll come down, sir, I will, sir—oh sir—please, sir."

The farmer was inexorable; and highly delighted at the position of affairs, he whipped off his coat to give Tiny Tom what he called "a reg'lar doin'" when he did come down.

Tom Tit determined upon an unconditional surrender, and fearing that his boots might slip upon bark of the tree, proceeded to divest himself of them and his stockings.

Tom's cap was full of prime apples, and as he sat upon the branch above with the cap in his lap, and pulling off his shoes at the same time, there came another "Kitchshoooo," and down the boy came with a run.

The farmer was prepared for him, but he was stopped in his progress.

He didn't fall.

On the contrary, he was beautifully and most artistically suspended by the seat of his shorts on the peg of an amputated branch.

Oh, murder! here was a fix.

The farmer's laughter was uproarious, and Tom Tit's position was horrible.

He could see the ground flowing backwards and forwards beneath him, and the face of the farmer in ecstasies within half a yard of his own.

Farmer Jones never enjoyed anything so much in his life before, and got upon the railings to reach the branch and give Tiny Tom a swing.

"To and fro, to and fro, there ye go! Hah! hah! I a-a-ah!"

Tom's agony was great, and he yelled till he was black in the face.

Occasionally the tormentor gave him a prod with the stick to wake him up and keep the game alive.

Tom's struggles were very strong, but grew frantic when Farmer Jones announced,—

"Here comes the boy with the gum."

"Ya-a-ab!" screamed Tom, and kicked like a young elephant.

But it wasn't the gum, it was the parson and a company of ladies.

The parson took the matter in a glance, and hastily ran to the rescue. The ladies were soon there also, and the parson was about to fetch a ladder, to extricate the lad from his terrible position, when there was a "skrtcb" and a "thup," and Tiny Tom fell into the parson's arms, but he left the seat of his shorts upon the tree.

The effect upon the ladies was magical, and they all had a very pressing and immediate engagements in the village.

The parson was crimson in a moment, and Tiny Tom was sensible of a cold draught.

That boy is a celebrated jockey now, and will well remember the anecdote recorded above.

FRAU QUELL.

In one of the workhouses of Dublin an old woman died who had long been an inmate. Boards are generally as hard as they ought to be, but never omit, however, to show a becoming consideration for bereaved friends. Accordingly, in this instance, word was promptly sent to Bridget Murphy, as we assume her name to be, informing her that her mother was no more. Bridget hastened to the Workhouse, and was brought by an officer of the house into the dead-house where the body lay. He witnessed, unmoved the outburst of Bridget's grief, being familiar with such scenes. After it had subsided, she examined more minutely the features of the deceased, and at length exclaimed, "That is not my mother at all!" He calmly observed, "Well, you ought to know best." She looked again, and more perplexed than before, remarked; "It cannot be my mother—sure my mother had a Williamite nose!" It may be well to explain that the Celtic antipathy to the "glorious memory" of King William does not extend to his nose, which is regarded with traditional respect as the type of true gentility. The officer replied, "Well, you had better leave her where she is," "Is it to leave her in this cold place?" she said; "no, I must take her away." She had the remains accordingly removed to her lodgings. Her friends and neighbours assembled that night at the "wake," which was conducted with the customary observances—the chief essentials on such occasions being innumerable candles, unlimited whisky, and an inexhaustible mixture of sacred and secular things, lamentation and love-making, snuff-taking, story-telling, smoking, joking, gibing, and, to crown all, an indiscriminate row at the end. Matters went on as usual until an advanced hour in the night, when misgivings as to the identity of the deceased began to increase as the liquor began to fail. At last they were convinced that they had been "waking" the wrong person. A hearse was obtained, the body was brought back to the workhouse, and next day they discovered that it was another Mrs. Murphy who had died, and that the one in whose honour the "wake had been" celebrated was still a living charge upon the rates. Now comes the sequel of the tale. In a few days a bill, of which the following is an exact copy, was furnished to the guardians to recover expenses incurred through their mistake in the notice: "Bread and butter, 4s. 6d.; office (for the dead), 1s.; four extra angels, 8d.; bringing the 'deceased' home, 4s. 8d.; candles, 1s. 6d.; snuff and sheets, 1s. 4d.; whisky, 4s. 8d.; porter, 2s.; pipes, tobacco, and snuff, 1s. 3d.; paid for washing sheets after 'corps' was taken away, 1s.; cleaning the place 1s.; loss sustained by two grandsons kept from work on behalf of the 'deceased', 7s. 6d.; Nothin' charged for grief." The modest liberality of the last item is worthy of all praise. One cannot help wondering that "angels" were so cheap—only 2d. a piece—while spirits of another kind cost 4s. 8d. It is enough to say that the little bill was settled.

CHINESE WOMEN.—The idolaters of beauty, the Chinese, are for ever at the feet of the beings whom they persecute. When any of their wives are indisposed, they fasten a silken thread round her wrist, the cord of which is given to the physician, and it is only by the motion which the pulsation communicates to it that he is allowed to judge of the state of his patient. This precaution of jealousy is almost unique in its kind.

TOPHAM THE STRONG MAN OF ISLINGTON.

In Upper-street, Islington, was formerly a public-house with the sign of the Duke's Head, at the south-east corner of Gad's-row (now St. Alban's-place), which was remarkable, towards the middle of the last century, on account of its landlord, Thomas Topham, "the strong man of Islington."

He was brought up to the trade of a carpenter, but abandoned it soon after the term of his apprenticeship had expired; and about the age of twenty-four became the host of the Red Lion, near the old Hospital of St. Luke, in which house he failed.

When he had attained his full growth his stature was about five feet ten inches, and he soon began to give proof of his strength and muscular power.

The first public exhibition of his extraordinary strength was that of pulling against a horse, lying upon his back, and placing his feet against the dwarf wall that divided Upper and Lower Moorfields.

He afterwards pulled against two horses, but his legs being placed horizontally instead of rising parallel to the traces of the horses, he was jerked from his position; it was, nevertheless, the opinion of Dr. Desaguliers, the eminent mechanic and experimental philosopher, that had Topham been in a proper position he might have kept his situation against the pulling of four horses without inconvenience.

The following are among the feats which Dr. Desaguliers says he himself saw Topham perform:—By the strength of his fingers, he rolled up a very strong and large pewter dish.

Among the curiosities of the British Museum, some years ago, was a pewter dish, marked near the edge, "April 3, 1737, Thomas Topham, of London, carpenter, rolled up this dish (made of the hardest pewter), by the strength of his hands, in the presence of Dr. John Desaguliers, &c."

He broke seven or eight pieces of a tobacco-pipe by the force of his middle finger, having laid them on his first and third fingers.

Having thrust the bowl of a strong tobacco-pipe under his garter his legs being bent, he broke it to pieces by the tendons of his hams, without altering the position of his legs.

Another bowl of this kind he broke between his first and second finger, by pressing them together sideways.

He took an iron kitchen poker, about a yard long, and three inches round, and bent it nearly to a right angle, by striking upon his bare left arm, between the elbow and the wrist.

Holding the ends of a poker of like size in his hands, and the middle of it against the back of his neck, he brought both extremities of it together before him; and what was yet more difficult, pulled it almost straight again.

He broke a rope of two inches in circumference; though from his awkward manner he was obliged to exert four times more strength than was necessary.

He lifted a rolling stone of eight hundred pounds' weight with his hands only, standing in a frame above it, and taking hold of a chain fastened thereto.

It is probable that Topham kept the Duke's Head at the time he exhibited the exploit of lifting three hog-head of water, weighing one thousand eight hundred and thirty-one pounds, in Coldbath Fields, May 28, 1741, in commemoration of the taking of Porto Bello by Admiral Vernon; and which he performed in the presence of the Admiral and thousands of spectators.

After Topham had left Islington, and taken another public-house, situated in Hog-lane, Shoreditch, the infidelity of his wife had such an effect upon him, that, in a fit of frenzy, after beating her most unmercifully, and stabbing her in the breast, he inflicted several wounds upon himself; and having lingered several days, died in the flower of his age, August 10, 1749.

DEPTH OF DIFFERENT SEAS.—In the neighbourhood of the Continent the seas are often shallow, thus the Baltic Sea has a depth of only 120 feet, between the coasts of Germany and those of Sweden. The Adriatic between Venice and Trieste has a depth of only 130 feet. Between France and England the greatest depth does not exceed 300 feet, while south-west of Ireland, it suddenly sinks to 2,000 feet. The seas in the South of Europe are much deeper than the preceding. The western basin of the Mediterranean seems to be very deep. In the narrowest parts of the Straits of Gibraltar, it is not more than 1,000 feet below the surface. A little farther to wards the east, the depth falls to 3,000 feet, and at the south of the coast of Spain to nearly 6,000 feet; on the north-west

coast of Sardinia, bottom has not been found at the depth of nearly 5,000 feet. With respect to the open seas their depths are little known. About 250 miles south of Nantucket the lead has been sunk to 7,800 feet. In 78° north latitude, Captain Ross has exceeded 6,000 feet in Baffin's Bay; but the most astonishing depths are found in the Southern Atlantic, west of the Cape of Good Hope 16,000 feet have been found; and the plummet has not found bottom at 27,000 feet, west of St. Helena.

A WINTER SONG.

Through leafless trees and hedges bare

The winds of winter blow;

Fast fall the gloomy shades of night,

The ground is white with snow.

The birds, like summer friends, are flown

To lands with sunshiny blest;

The very trees with anguish moan,

As though they longed for rest.

But faithful robin sits and sings

Upon the leafless tree,

Outside the partly opened door,

A touching lullaby.

And there a host of urchins play—

Their cheeks with warmth aglow,

Along their lonely starlit way,

A-rolling in the snow.

The beggar round him draws his rags,

And falt'ring and slow—

With care-worn face and tottering limbs,

Goes quaking through the snow.

While Luna sheds her silvery light

Upon the world below,

And placidly the stars reflect

Their splendour in the snow.

PERCY HAILEY.

IMPORTANT TO EVERYBODY!

SEE advertisement headed REDUCED in this week's YOUNG BRITON.

I HAVE for sale "Dick Turpin, Knight of the Road," 254 numbers, cost £11s. 21., will take 10s., or go to exchange; also "Captain Hawk," 85 numbers, will take 4s. Address Crippen, 34, Chrissell-road, Craumer-road, Brixton London.

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UNDER THE CARE OF PHILANDER JACKSON, H.U.A.

A. H. GRAHAM.—A father can be compelled to pay for reasonable necessities supplied for a son under twenty-one years of age, and of course, so long as the father supports the son, the latter is under the control of the former. 2. Not until the son is twenty-one years old.

SUTTONIAN.—Every man is entitled to his own opinion upon religious matters; but I do not hold with thrusting one person's opinions down the throats of others, and therefore do not feel inclined to give insertion to your effusion in praise of "The Holy Suttonian Gospel." I may as well frankly say, however, that it reads far more like the lucubration of a lunatic than anything else I can think of just now.

IGNORANUS.—The meaning of the Latin phrase you quote in your letter—"Magna est veritas, et prevalebit"—is "Truth is great (or powerful) and must prevail." "Chef-d'œuvre" (pronounced *shaydour*), is French, and means—"Chief, or greatest work"—in general, "masterpiece."

KOKORIKO.—Your query "Who was Cassius?" is not very easily answered, inasmuch as there were several renowned individuals who bore the name. We give you the particulars of four. 1. Avidius Cassius, a Roman commander under Mark Antony, is said by some to have been a Scythian, and by others the son of Avidius Severus, a person of considerable rank in the Roman empire. He commanded the "Hundred and Sixty-four" against the Parthians, whom he defeated, and, after considerable ravages, put an end to the war. He next commanded the army in Syria, where he restored the troops, who had relaxed into effeminacy, and licentiousness, to discipline and good order. He then marched against Egypt, which he conquered. In 175 he took advantage of the information of Aurelius's illness to spread a report of his death, and was proclaimed emperor by the army. Aurelius, on receiving intelligence of his usurpation, immediately set out for Illyricum, and the Senate proclaimed Cassius a traitor. Before the two armies met, Cassius was assassinated, and his head was carried to the emperor, who spared his family; but Commodus afterwards caused them to be burned alive. 2. Caius Cassius, one of the murderers of Cæsar, who had saved his life after the battle of Pharsalia. He married the sister of Brutus, and in the partition of the provinces, obtained Africa as his share. When Augustus and Antony prevailed against the conspirators at Rome, he retired to Philippi, where he and his friends were defeated. Afraid of falling into the enemy's hands, he caused one of his freedmen to run him through the body with a sword, B.C. 42. 3. Longinus Lucius Cassius was a Roman prætor, rendered remarkable by his inflexible administration of justice. He had the ome given him of being the rock of the accuself and adopted first the practical maxim of "Cui bono?" (To what good will it tend?) He lived B.C. 115. 4. Parmenias Cassius, a Latin poet, was also one of the conspirators against Cæsar. He afterwards attached himself to Antony, and was put to death by Octavianus. Varus, who killed him, took away his papers, and it is supposed that the play of "Thyestes" which goes under the name of Varus, was in reality the production of Cassius. I think your query relates to either Caius Cassius—the Cassius of Shakespeare—or Parmenias Cassius.

S. R.—"The Boys of Birmaham School" is at present out of print. This famous and favourite school tale will be re-issued immediately, in a coloured wrapper, with a pre-arranged plate gratis. 2. "Tyburn Dick" is now to be had at Hogarth House. It is complete in 52 numbers.

A. H. GRAHAM suggests that there should be "Lessons on book-keeping" given in the "Sons of Britannia." We leave this suggestion in the hands of our readers.

M. A. S. thinks an historical romance would be appreciated. Boys, what is your opinion?

COCKNEY BOY.—That public-spirited gentlemen, Sir Hugh Myddelton, was a native of Donagh, and a citizen of London. The defective state of the water supply of the latter city led to his projection of the New River, for the successful completion of which he was knighted by James I.

CASPAR HAUSER.—The Stoics were a sect of philosophers, who taught that happiness was only to be found in the practise of virtue. They denied that health, reputation, and riches were, properly speaking, good; and they contended that poverty, ignominy and pain were not evils. "Virtue alone," said their founder, Zeno, "is sufficient to happiness; and the wise man may enjoy it at all times be his condition what it may." The following question has often been asked relation to the teachings of the Stoics: Zeno is said to have died at the age of ninety-

eight, having never experienced any sickness or indisposition whatever. Had Zeno been the victim of pain, reproach and poverty, would he have taught that these things were not evils?

PASSIONATE PETER.—You ask me how you can cure yourself of a bad temper? It is said concerning Julius Cæsar, that, upon any provocation, he would repeat the Roman alphabet before he suffered himself to speak, that he might be more just and calm in his resentment. The delay of a few moments has often set seeming affronts in a juster and kinder light; it has often lessened, if not annihilated, the supposed injury, and prevented violence and revenge. That "the proper study of mankind is man," is not more true than that "he who conquers himself is the greatest of all conquerors,"—or, in the words of the wisest of men "He who governs his spirit is better than the mighty."

QUILT.—Great men are not always, like Dr. Johnson, of a bulk amounting to ponderosity. For instance, Sir Christopher Wren was of low stature, his forehead broad and fair, his nose slightly aquiline, the eyes large and expressive, and the whole aspect stamped with intelligence and talent. He was light and active of body, walked with a certain stateliness of air, and his constitution—rather delicate than robust—was saved, it is said from consumption by habits of regularity and temperance. That he was a little man, a tradition preserved by Seward sufficiently shows. Charles II. on walking through his newly-erected hunting-place at Newmarket, said: "These rooms are too low." Wren went up to the king and replied: "An please your Majesty I think them high enough." Whereupon Charles, stooping down to Sir Christopher's stature, answered with a smile, "On second thoughts, I think so too." He had that calm and philosophic temper which contradiction could not disturb; he heard his opinions questioned, and even saw his designs deformed by the envious or the ignorant, without change of mood or a snappish remark.

**WANTED!
FIVE HUNDRED
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BOYS!!!**

EXCELSIOR.—The highest position is not always the safest. The French general, Cherin, was once conducting a detachment through a very difficult mountain pass. He exhorted his soldiers to endure patiently the fatigue of the march. "It is easy for you to talk," said one of the soldiers near him; "you, who are mounted on a fine horse—but we poor devils!" On hearing these words Cherin dismounted and quickly proposed to the discontented soldier to take his place. The latter did so; but, scarcely had he mounted, than a shot from the adjoining heights struck and killed him. "You see," says Cherin, calling to his troops, "that the most elevated position is not the least dangerous." After which, he quietly remounted his horse, and continued the march.

PAT O'CONNOR.—Though the priests in Ireland are said to exercise great control over the peasantry, yet occasionally the rough logic of the sons of the Emerald Isle proves too much for the holy father. Luke McGeoghan, being at confession, owned among other things that he had stolen a pig from Tim Carol. The priest told him he must make restitution; Luke couldn't—how could he when he had eaten it long ago? Then he must give Tim one of his own. No; Luke didn't like that—it wouldn't satisfy his conscience; it wouldn't be the downright identical pig he stole. Well, the priest said, if he wouldn't he'd rue it, for that the *corpus delictum*, Tim's pig, would be brought forward against him at the final reckoning. "You don't mean that father?" Indeed, but the father did. "And maybe, Tim himself will be there, too?" "Most certainly." "Och, then, why bother about the trifle this side of the grave? If Tim's there, and the pig's there sure I can make restitution to him then, you know."

W. KELLY.—We find that there are entered upon "Lloyd's Register" four vessels with the name "Great Britain." The only one built at Bristol was completed there in 1840, and the same vessel was, we believe, run ashore in Dundrum Bay, Ireland, a year or two after she was launched, and was then towed across to Liverpool, where she underwent repairs, but the name of the dock, and the precise date of the accident, we have been unable to ascertain. Thanks for your encomiums upon our journals.

ALFREO J. HARNESTY, 243, Sandusky-street, Alleghany City, Pennsylvania, U.S.A., desires very much to correspond with some young lady or gentleman (lady preferred) from London. Anyone willing to correspond will please address as above.

HARRY HAWSE.—Yes. 2. Yes. 3. You will be able to judge for yourself by perusing the articles on "How to go to Sea," as they appear from week to week.

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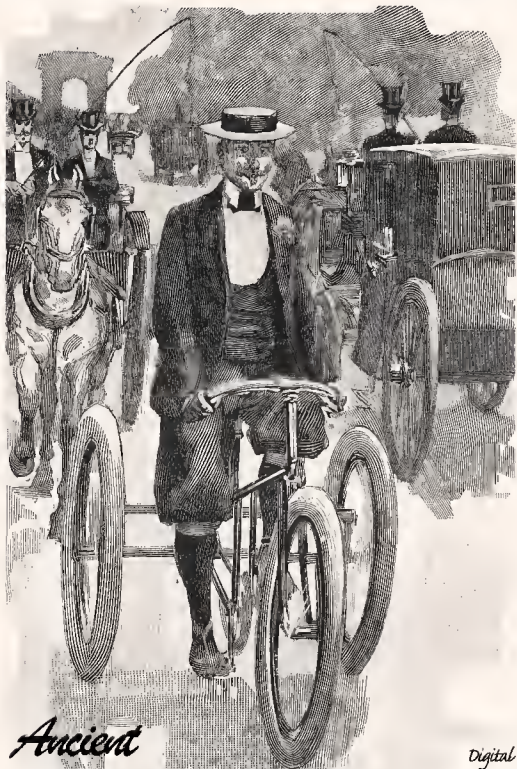
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